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The Atlantic

HOLLY BRUBACH ON BALLET / ROBERT REICH ON THE AMERICAN CORPORATION

A Democrat in the People's Republic

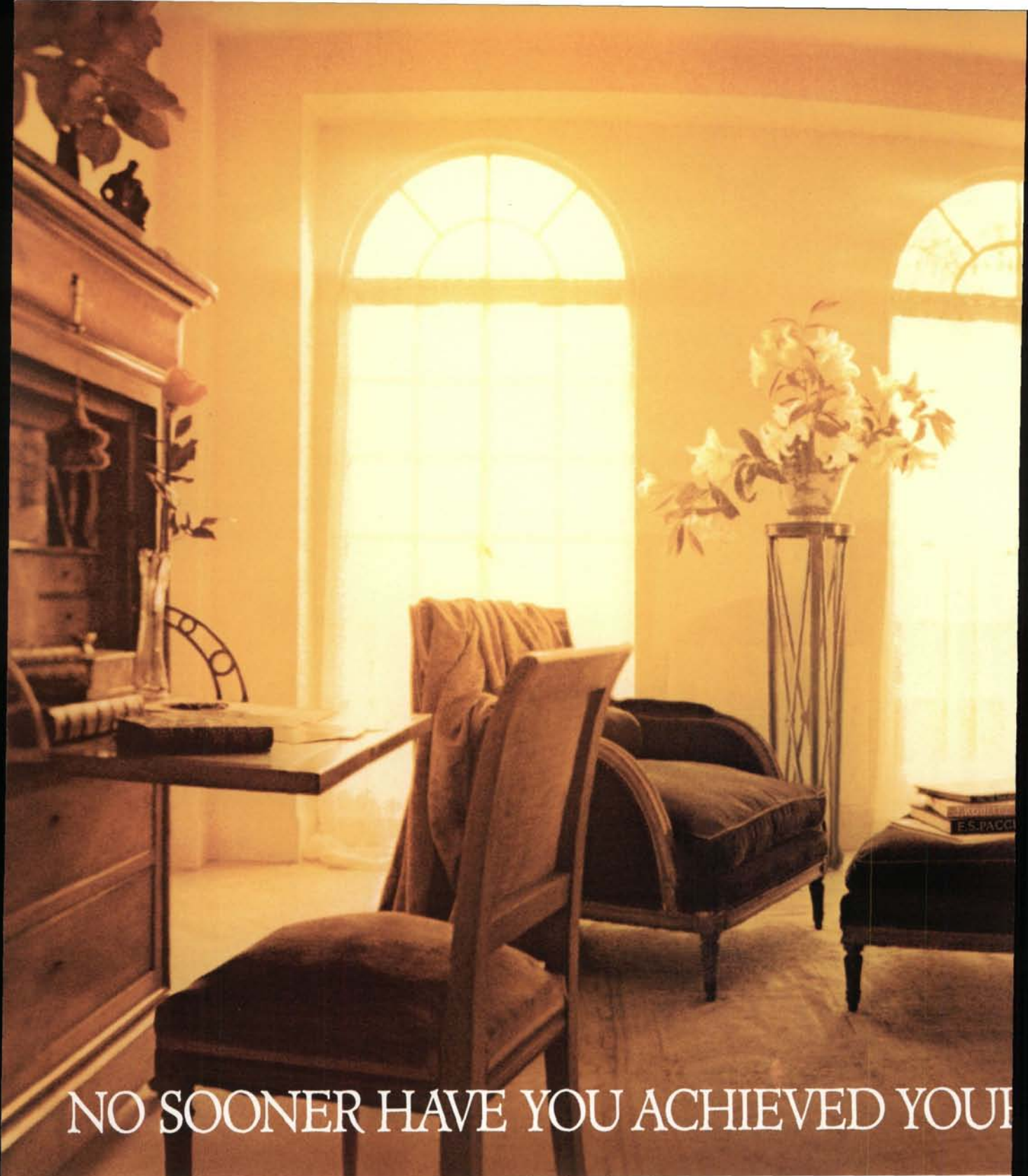
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*Fang Lizhi,
the inspiration
for student
unrest, is
China's
Sakharov*

By
Orville Schell





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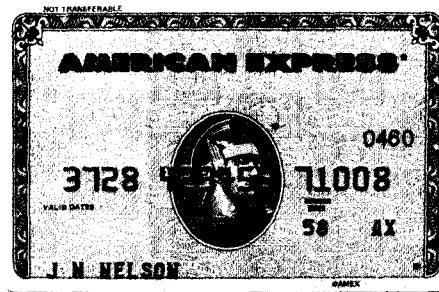
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ARTICLES

- 35 CHINA'S ANDREI SAKHAROV** **ORVILLE SCHELL**
If the boundaries of acceptable political discourse are broadening in China, it is largely because of the activities of a prominent astrophysicist, Fang Lizhi.
- 62 ROOM ENOUGH TO MOVE** **HOLLY BRUBACH**
In American ballet the power has shifted from the artists to the administrators, raising some unsettling new questions. Here are two cautionary tales.
- 76 CORPORATION AND NATION** **ROBERT B. REICH**
It used to be said that what was good for corporations and their shareholders was also good for the national economy. This principle is no longer valid.

REPORTS & COMMENT

- 18 NOTES:**
THE BIKE **TIMOTHY FOOTE**
- 20 HAITI:**
RETURN TO NORMALCY **KEVIN McDERMOTT**
- 25 TRADE:**
BLUES IN THE GULF **JONATHAN MASLOW**

HUMOR AND FICTION

- 32 VANNA KARENINA** **FRANK GANNON**
- 54 LEO** **SHARON SHEEHE STARK**

POETRY

- 46 TOMATO SOUP** **MARK IRWIN**

- 58 MICA COUNTRY** **ROBERT MORGAN**

BOOKS

- 89 ANCHORS AWAY** **NICHOLAS LEMANN**
Prime Times and Bad Times by Ed Joyce
- 92 THE FRIGHTFUL AND THE SUBLIME** **BENJAMIN DEMOTT**
Master of the Return by Tova Reich
- 94 BRIEF REVIEWS** **PHOEBE-LOU ADAMS**

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

- 4 CONTRIBUTORS**
- 6 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**
- 16 THE MAY ALMANAC**
- 75 FIRST ENCOUNTERS** **EDWARD SOREL**
AND NANCY CALDWELL SOREL
- 83 HEALTH:**
FIRST, DO NO HARM **ELLEN RUPPEL SHELL**
- 85 TRAVEL:**
TOWARD APPOMATTOX **JACK BEATTY**
- 95 ACROSTIC No. 34** **DOROTHY OSBORNE**
- 97 THE PUZZLER** **EMILY COX**
AND HENRY RATHVON
- 98 WORD WATCH** **ANNE H. SOUKHANOV**

Cover illustration by Pierre Le-Tan



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“Self-confidence is important. Confidence in others is essential.”

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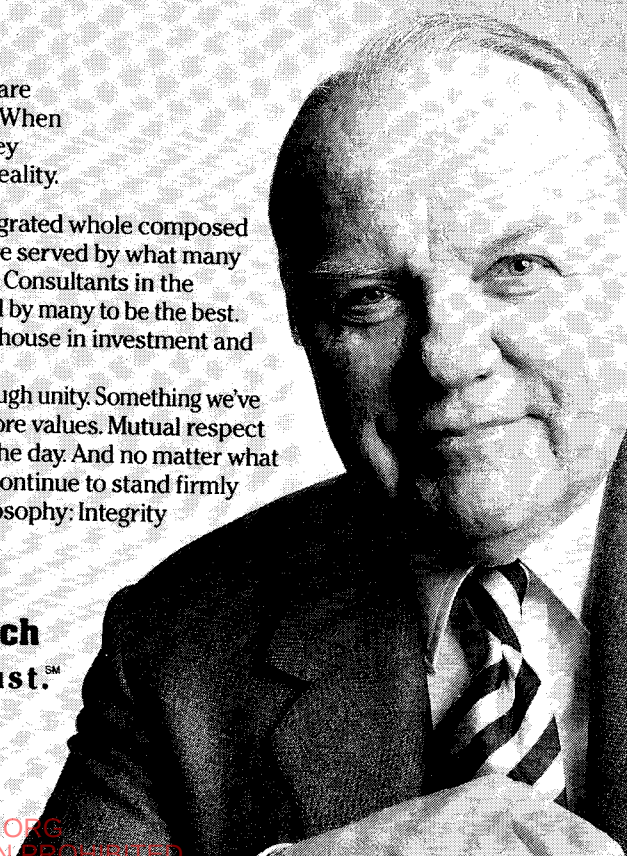
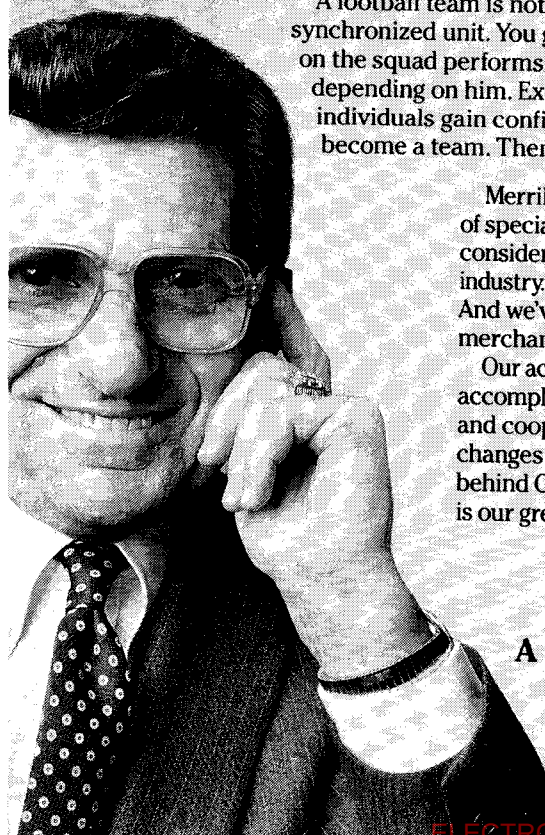
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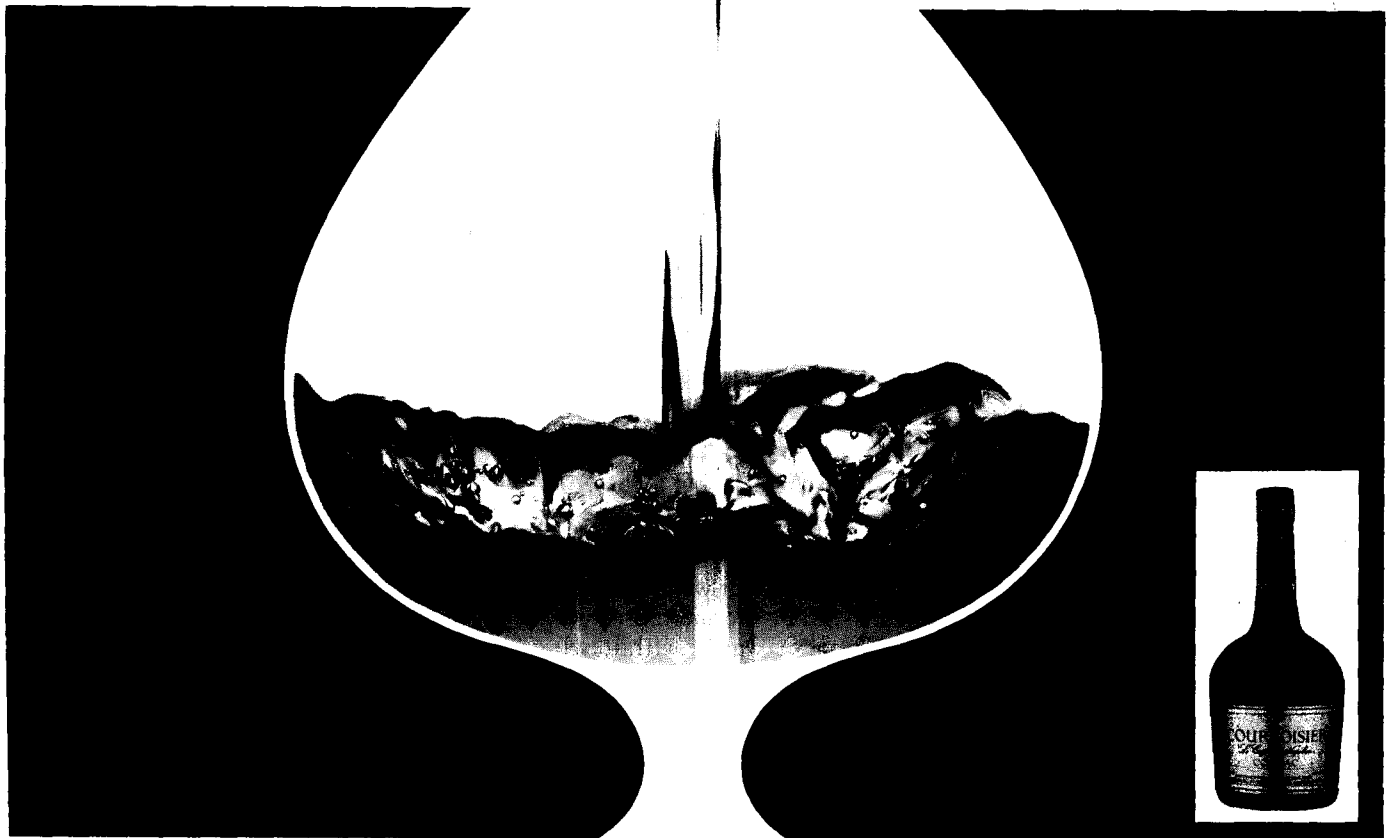
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The May Almanac was compiled with the assistance of Gail Cleere and the staff of the U.S. Naval Observatory John Schorr, of the Washington Asparagus Growers Association; Steve Cochi of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control Sotheby's Art Market Trends; the National Marine Fisheries Service; Concerned Shrimpers of America; the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities; the U.S. Department of Education; and the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE BASES DILEMMA

In his article "The Bases Dilemma" (February *Atlantic*) James Fallows suggests that the security relations the United States maintains with the non-Communist nations of East Asia provide Washington with little more than "vague satisfaction." Unless one is prepared to argue that any fear that the Soviet Union might embark upon military adventure in the region is paranoid, a credible policy of deterrence seems advisable. If such a policy is recommended, then a defense of the Japanese home islands serves not only Japanese interests but also those of the United States (not to speak of the interests of the remaining littoral and insular states of the region).

The Japanese home islands command the critical waterways of Northeast Asia (the Soya, Tsugaru, and Tsushima straits), behind which the bulk of the Soviet Pacific Fleet is confined. The ability to control the passage of ships through those sea lanes acts as a deterrent to any Soviet military initiatives. To accomplish that requires that the United States be prepared to join with Japan in the defense of the home islands. A failure to demonstrate a readiness and an ability to do just that would diminish the United States in the estimation of all Asians. The costs would be diplomatic, political, and perhaps economic. In a general conflict the price would be exorbitant.

A. JAMES GREGOR
*University of California
Berkeley, Calif.*

I admired James Fallows's keen analysis of the military-bases problems in the Philippines, but we have alternatives to the options he mentions: stubbornly staying or warily withdrawing. The United States needs to infuse the Philippines with a good dose of military-industrial entrepreneurial spirit; then the Filipinos will genuinely desire our presence.

When I served as a Navy officer in the early days of Reaganomics, I witnessed the sudden resurgence of the military-industrial complex in San Diego, where I was stationed. There I was often amazed at the private contractors, small and large, who flourished on the largesse

of military work. Yet when our ship pulled into Subic Bay, Philippines, I observed that the Filipino workers—performing the same jobs as San Diegans—were for all practical purposes in the direct employ of the U.S. Navy.

I think that the Philippine and American governments must come to some intelligent, creative agreement that encourages Filipino industrial development based on service to the fleet. An agreement that requires the United States to move a percentage of its manufacturing equipment into the private ownership of Filipino companies would be a brilliant move, and should have been begun decades ago. This would, for the first time, give Filipinos a bona fide, vested, *capitalist* interest in the U.S. presence. Communist propaganda would wither if Filipinos could say, as do manufacturers in San Diego, that the Navy is good for *privately owned* business.

JONATHAN B. BRITTEN
Memphis, Tenn.

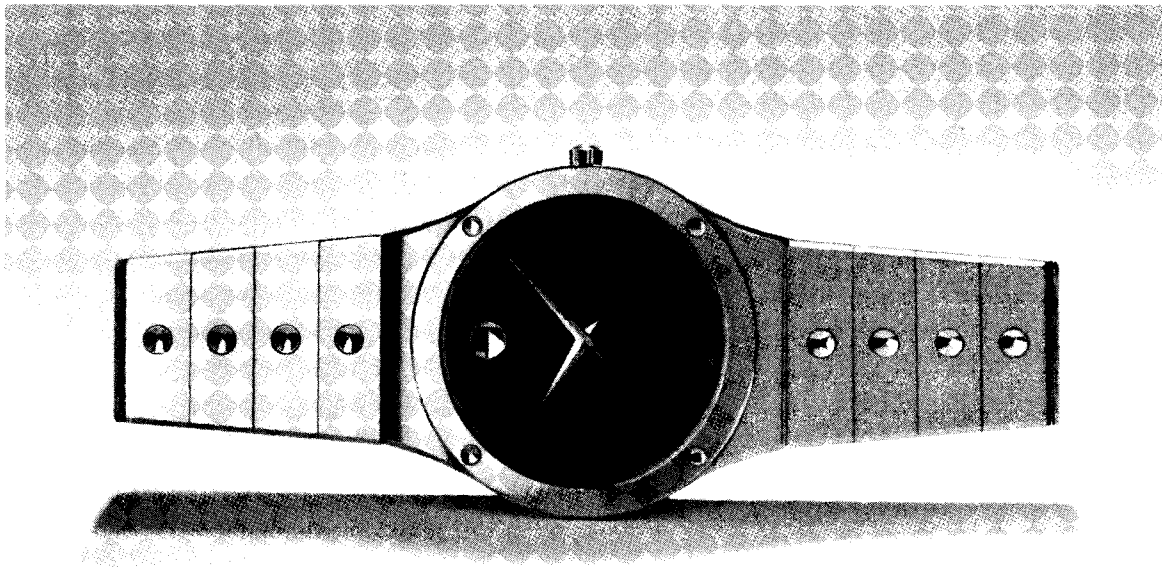
James Fallows's article was a breath of fresh air: Americans are unaccustomed to thinking of themselves as a colonizing power, even if a benevolent one. However, if by the statement "the Philippines, alone in the world, *was* America's colony" Fallows means that the United States had only one colony, he should do some more exploring in the Pacific: a current list of U.S. colonies includes American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands (Caribbean), the Mariana Islands, the Caroline Islands, the Marshall Islands, and, depending on one's definition of a colony, Puerto Rico (Caribbean).

Like France, which "decolonized" its empire by waving a linguistic magic wand over its colonies, incorporating them into metropolitan France, the United States hides the colonial status of its dependents behind terms like "trust territory" and "commonwealth"—but colonies they remain nevertheless.

MARC A. SCHINDLER
Gloucester, Ontario

James Fallows replies:

Yes, bottling up the Soviet fleet on the other side of the Japanese straits is useful to the United States. And yes, the United States has a moral and legal obligation



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gation to defend Japan, having made that guarantee when drafting Japan's postwar "de-militarized" constitution. American bases in Japan remain very important to both countries. Their importance is what makes the Japanese "free ride" a true dilemma for America—which was the point I was trying to make. We can't afford to keep paying so much for Pacific defense, but we can't afford not to.

I understand Mr. Schindler's point about America's colonial-style relations with some small islands. But the Philippines is worth singling out as the one place that fits the classic pattern of the colonial age: outright military conquest and then rule as a "colony," not as a "trust territory," a "commonwealth," or something similar.

LOVE TRIANGLES

I found Ethel Person's essay "Love Triangles" (February *Atlantic*) particularly enlightening on the subject of male solidarity: a man will contemplate an adulterous affair with his wife's best friend but shudder in horror at the suggestion of an adulterous affair with his best friend's wife.

I register two objections, however. Person speaks well to the many types and causes of affairs, but she virtually ignores the often devastating, long-lasting effect that adultery can have on the adulterers, the loyal partners, and the families of both parties. By concentrating on causes rather than consequences Person not only overlooks one of the classic nineteenth-century novels about adultery, Theodor Fontane's *Effi Briest*, but also ignores the question central to this novel: how much time must pass before an act of adultery can be forgiven?

Person also argues that the public's infatuation with the extracurricular activities of famous individuals should not be surprising, for all of us—through infantile bonds with our mother and Oedipal struggles with our father—are involved in triangular relationships at a very early age. She implies that our developmental history somehow acclimates us to, or heightens our interest in, such amorous affairs. I propose a more basic, less profound reason for the public's interest in such things: a lust for smut and scandal. One doesn't need Oedipus to understand this.

THEODORE PAPPAS
Cambridge, Mass.

Couched between the roses and valentines illustrating Ethel Person's article "Love Triangles" was an important, if only implied, idea—namely, that as far as we know, human beings are the only species that can elaborate mental processes called fantasies into the intricate mental structures that enable us to organize our lives. Relationships with other human beings, usually parents, point the direction for such structuring, and most of the job is done without anyone's awareness. This means that despite our world views of power and pragmatism, it is still fantasy, and the way one has chosen to order it, that actually holds sway. Thus it may be supposed that an aspirant to the United States presidency like Gary Hart (whom Person mentions) may be behaving in his love life according to a prescription he engineered in his history, of which he is largely unaware.

Far from being roses and valentines, Person's writings have deep and far-reaching significance, and I am in debt to her for her efforts.

ROSALINE SHEVACH DIAMANT
Haworth, N.J.

Ethel Person writes with insight and clarity about what drives us. I was initially put off but persevered, and was eventually spellbound at the almost frightening applicability to my own and my friends' lives of much of what Person had to say.

The article, like great literature, forces one to re-examine his or her choices and actions in life. We all too rarely find this in a magazine piece. The smallest insights gained in this realm are cause for delight; I am jumping for joy (and looking forward to reading Person's book).

MICHAEL J. MERNIN
Washington, D.C.

WORD WATCH

In the February Word Watch Anne H. Soukhanov defines *buildering* as "the sport of scaling the façades of tall buildings, often without the use of climbing equipment." Although the second part of this definition is correct—a climber will almost always builder without equipment—the first part is not: the goal of the sport is never to scale a tall building.

This misunderstanding arises, I think, from the eccentric ascents the media choose to publicize. George Wil-

lig's sensationalistic 1977 climb of the World Trade Center received a great deal of media coverage and has since then informed the public's image of rock climbing. Unfortunately, Willig's climb was a distorted version of rock-climbing as it is actually practiced, and the public's image, similarly, is distorted. The real sport of rock-climbing remains mysterious to most people.

"Sleek-skinned modern high-rises," in the sense suggested, have nothing to do with the sport of buildering. Rather, buildering is almost exactly synonymous with *bouldering* (a subsport of rock-climbing), with one important difference: while bouldering, one climbs on natural boulders or short cliffs, and while buildering, one climbs on man-made structures. But the top is not necessarily the goal in either case, as it presumably is when one attempts to scale tall buildings. One boulders or builders either for the sheer gymnastic joy of physically difficult moves (one is in this case a specialist—a boulderer) or for the training value for rock-climbing (bouldering is to rock-climbing what, say, sprints are to distance running). Bouldering is *not*, however, as is suggested in Word Watch, "basic or intermediate rock-climbing."

JEFF WEBB
Santa Barbara, Calif.

Your February Word Watch column takes a serious fall ("a screamer") in its definition of *bouldering* as "a term that refers to basic or intermediate rock-climbing." In fact bouldering is a separate branch of the climbing sport, practiced without the backup support of ropes, protective anchors, and belaying at low levels (up to twenty feet or so) usually on boulders or very low outcrops, usually at extremely high levels of difficulty in the actual moves. It can be a training ground for advanced rock climbs, and it can be a sport unto itself. So tell Anne Soukhanov to lace on her Fires, chalk up, and have a go, but get some advice before she climbs too high. Otherwise she might peel, do some flight time, and ground out, all in a few brief seconds.

STUYVESANT K. BEARN
Lakeville, Conn.

I had to smile when I read that the word *buildering* may be making its way into the *American Heritage Dictionary*. A bit more background information on the word: High up in our apartment build-

1,000 SOLUTIONS

A Network For Rural Development

By Bob Bergland

America is looking for answers to tough economic problems.

One of the most acute problems has rural America in its grip. It's a story of loss . . . loss of jobs, loss of people, loss of federal help in dealing with problems, and an unraveling social and economic fabric.

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Over the years, rural electric systems have been involved in projects that have produced more than one million jobs through commercial, industrial, and community development. They themselves employ nearly 60,000 people across the country.

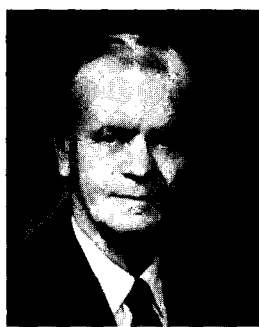
Recognizing that diversification is essential for the economic health of their communities, the co-ops have stepped up their development initiatives. They're arranging financing for local projects, providing technical assistance and office space, and supplying computerized plant site data and countless other services. ■■

Rural electric systems have learned some valuable lessons from their experience in supplying light and power. They know the success of any project depends upon the leadership and commitment of local organizations and people. They know the federal government is a powerful partner for local initiative through programs sensitive to rural needs. And they know that a "can do" attitude—the "art of the possible"—leads to significant results.

Because the well-being of rural America affects the country as a whole, strengthening the rural economy must rank high on the national agenda. America's consumer-owned rural electric systems pledge their know-how and their resolve to this national priority.

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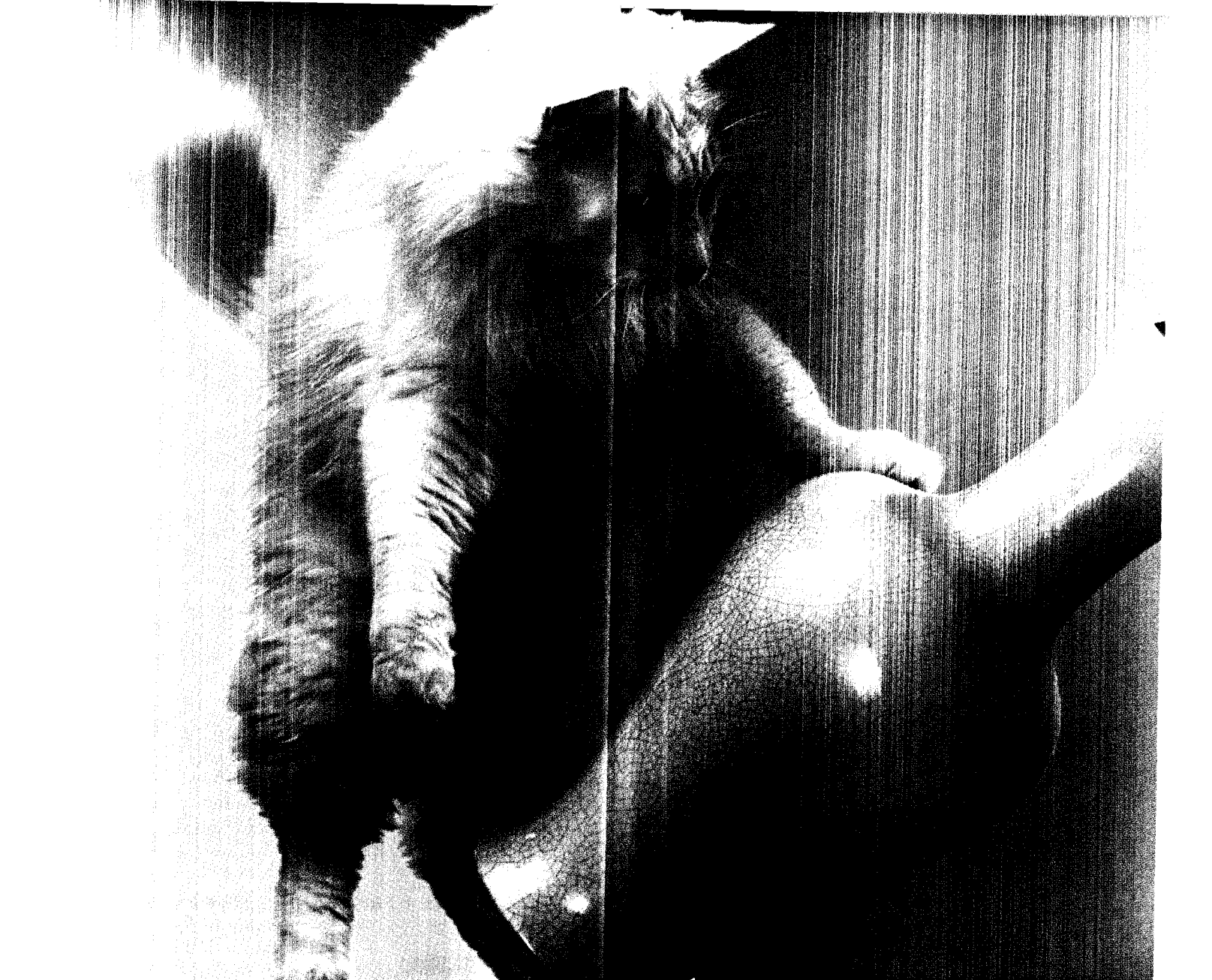
Bob Bergland, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, is Executive Vice President of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



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*photographed with Hasselblad, 80mm lens, 1/16 shutter speed, 1/60 strobe 1/2000.

unfortunately, while we usually catch all of the action, we weren't able to catch the vase.

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ing it is not unknown for someone to "builder" his way into an open window for the purposes of making off with some loot. "Buildering & entering," I think we'll call it now.

HINDA GONCHOR
New York, N.Y.

Anne Soukhanov replies:

The meaning given for *bouldering* in the February, 1988, "Word Watch" is based on data from several sources, one being the *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary*, which defines the word as "practice climbing on large boulders." Our citations (printed examples, from a broad group of sources, of word use over time), two of which I quote here, also attest the definition we gave: "The name *buildering* comes from *bouldering*, a form of practice-climbing done on small rocks that can be jumped or fallen off without serious bodily harm" (*The Washington Post*, May 3, 1978); "*Bouldering* involves climbing short, quick routes, usually not more than 25 feet long, and is considered the least dangerous method [of free climbing]. Ideal for beginners, *bouldering* offers rudimentary muscle development as well as technical problems to practice" (*Los Angeles Times*, July 15, 1987). Finally, Merriam-Webster's *12,000 Words: A Supplement to Webster's Third New International Dictionary* defines *bouldering* as "practice in the techniques of rock climbing." Obviously, all of us have a lot more to learn about this sport.

WEST COAST PROBLEMS

Nicholas Lemann's article "Growing Pains" (January *Atlantic*) accentuates racial differences or tension between Asians and whites in Southern California and fails to substantiate a charge that "unofficially, the worry is that the government of Taiwan is trying to orchestrate an Asian takeover of Monterey Park, possibly for some nefarious reason related to crime."

I wish to state unequivocally that neither the government of the Republic of China on Taiwan nor its representative office in the Greater Los Angeles area, the Coordination Council for North American Affairs, in Los Angeles, is involved in local politics, not to speak of "orchestration," as Lemann alleges in his article. Their main purpose is to promote mutual understanding and economic and cultural ties between the

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United States and the Republic of China on Taiwan.

TY CHEN
*Coordination Council for North
American Affairs
Los Angeles, Calif.*

Nicholas Lemann replies:

In trying to convey accurately the mood in Monterey Park, I thought it necessary to mention the kind of wild and unsubstantiated concerns that are on the minds of many of the whites there. It is true, and worth reporting, that in talking to whites in Monterey Park one hears about "orchestration" all the time. But I thought I had made it clear that I don't believe the Taiwanese government is running the show in Monterey Park.

CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME

I take exception to errors in the article "AIDS and Insects," by Katie Leishman (September *Atlantic*).

Several inaccuracies in the description of the chronic fatigue syndrome and its epidemiology may mislead and frighten the lay public. Cancers of the lymphatic and other organ systems are not prevalent in the chronic fatigue syndrome. This syndrome has no obvious association with AIDS. It pre-dates AIDS by at least half a century, and is not casually transmitted "like the common cold." A minority of its victims are health-care workers, few of whom "have treated AIDS patients." I work extensively with patients with the chronic fatigue syndrome, as well as with AIDS patients, and I have no concerns regarding an epidemiological link between these disorders. Finally, however debilitating the chronic fatigue syndrome can be to some individuals, it is, unlike AIDS, a non-progressive disorder that in fact remits in many instances.

STEPHEN E. STRAUS, M.D.
Bethesda, Md.

Katie Leishman replies:

The observations about chronic fatigue syndrome appeared in a section of my story devoted to alternative theories surrounding AIDS, and reflect not my opinions but those of authorities as experienced with this mysterious disease as Dr. Straus. Few assertions can be made with any certainty about this syndrome. Whether or not the assurances that Dr. Straus offers eventually prove

well-founded, they lack the force of evidence to displace other interpretations.

The syndrome has been described variously as chronic Epstein-Barr virus, chronic mononucleosis, and, most recently, chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS). A virus that many experts have connected with CFS, once called HBLV, is now universally described as HHV-6 (human herpes virus 6).

Dr. Straus rejects the association of lymphatic and other cancers with HHV-6 infection. He has not conducted any studies to establish this claim, nor does he cite any. An extremely high rate of B-cell lymphomas has been observed among the first recognized cluster group of CFS patients, near Lake Tahoe, California. Dr. Anthony Komaroff, one expert on the syndrome, observes that some patients show a reduction of the "natural killer cells" that are one of the body's major defenses against viral infection and cancer. Such a reduction is the major immune abnormality seen in most cancer patients. Interestingly, Dr. Robert Gallo's research group at the National Cancer Institute has been able to relate HHV-6 to only one other virus, a chicken virus that causes lymphomas, is transmitted by flu-like respiratory secretions, and can infect an entire flock within a matter of weeks.

Of special relevance is a study by Dr. Seymour Grufferman and his associates, at Duke University Medical School, published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* on December 12, 1985, and titled "Burkitt's and other non-Hodgkin's lymphomas in adults exposed to a visitor from Africa." The article concerns a woman who had symptoms suggestive of infectious mononucleosis when she visited four households on a trip to the United States. Members of all four households subsequently developed lymphomas.

According to Dr. Straus, CFS "has no obvious association with AIDS." Yet Dr. Zaki Salahuddin, an associate of Dr. Gallo's, reports that HHV-6 has been found in a very large number of patients with AIDS and African Burkitt's lymphoma, as well as in a number of patients with B-cell tumors. He cites a study in which 16 percent of blood samples taken from healthy individuals were positive for HHV-6, and approximately 30 percent of blood samples from AIDS patients and HIV-infected people were strongly positive for the virus. The Centers for Disease Control is aggressively investigating the role of HHV-6 infec-

tion as a possible co-factor in the progression of AIDS.

Whether or not the syndrome "pre-dates AIDS by at least half a century"—no source is cited—the virus may interact with AIDS in an important way. One can compare CFS to *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia, which previously appeared in only a small number of patients whose immune systems were defective or depressed but which now produces life-threatening pneumonia in many AIDS patients.

Dr. Straus dismisses the role of casual transmission, again without supporting references. The clinical experience in Lake Tahoe and the aforementioned study by Dr. Grufferman contradict this position. According to Dr. Paul Cheney, who has probably seen more CFS patients than any other physician, in many of the Lake Tahoe cases the syndrome appeared to be casually transmitted, like the common cold.

It is probably true that "a minority of its victims are health-care workers"—a minority of Americans are health-care workers. That has no bearing on whether or not health-care workers are at increased risk of contracting HHV-6. Health-care providers who work with hepatitis-B patients are at increased risk for contracting that virus. A disproportionate number of the members of the nation's largest association of CFS victims are health-care workers, and many of them have treated AIDS patients. It is known that various latent viruses and bacteria will often reactivate in AIDS patients, who then become contagious for them for long periods of time; some obvious examples are tuberculosis, syphilis, herpes simplex, and herpes zoster.

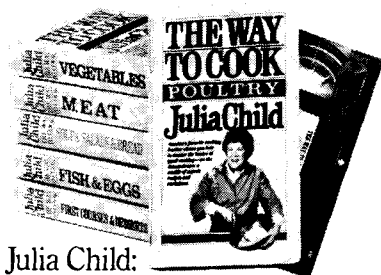
Finally, Dr. Straus says that the disease is debilitating but not progressive. Although a progressive immunodeficiency does not occur in CFS, other manifestations of the syndrome, such as certain eye diseases, can be progressive. Consequences of the disease can be fatal, such as the B-cell lymphomas.

Opinions differ widely as to the nature, symptomatology, and progression of CFS. The central point I wished to make in "AIDS and Insects" was that government researchers and health officials have consistently sought to enforce a conservative interpretation of preliminary data on new infectious agents concerning transmissibility and public danger. It is when premature and dogmatic assertions must later be revised that the public reacts with alarm.

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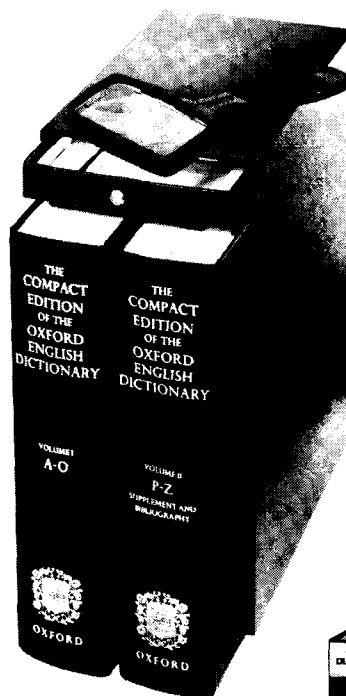
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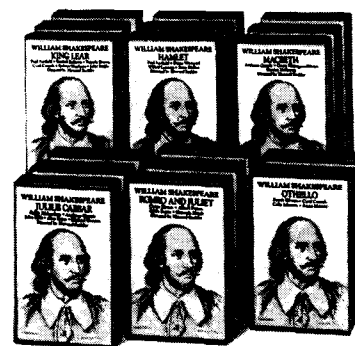
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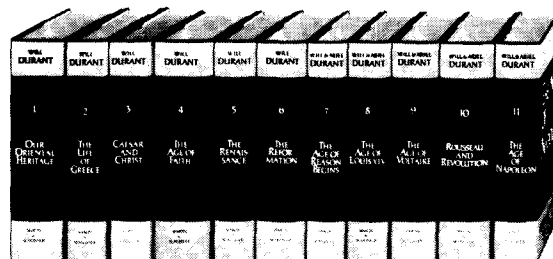
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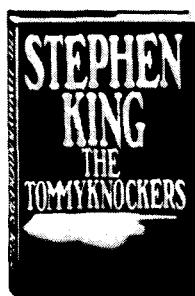
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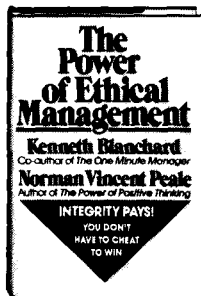
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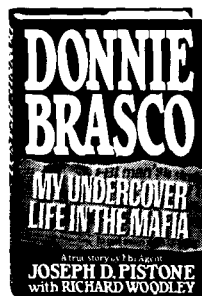
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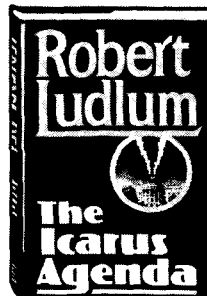
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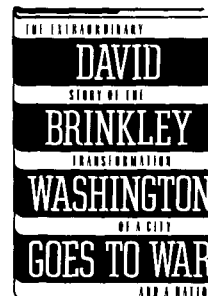
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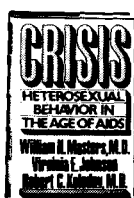
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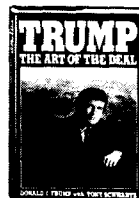
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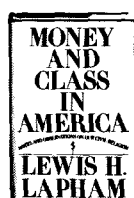
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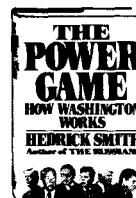
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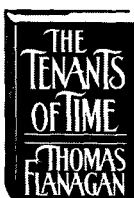
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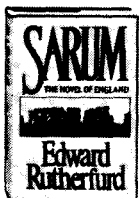
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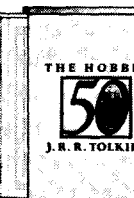
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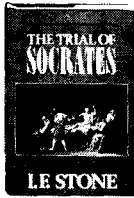
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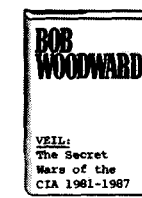
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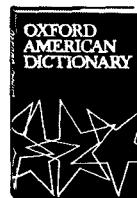
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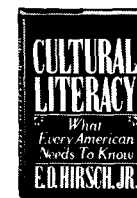
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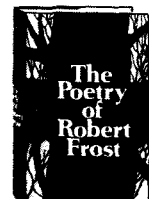
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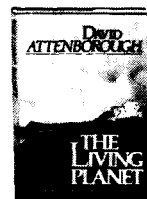
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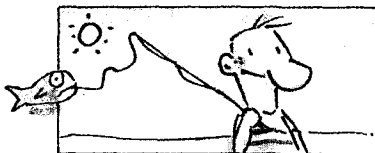
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GOVERNMENT

May 4, the day by which illegal aliens hoping to acquire legal status must have applied for amnesty, under the terms of the Immigration Act of 1986. The Immigration and Naturalization Service has set up 107 offices around the country to process the applications, which are expected to total nearly 2 million and to come mostly from Mexicans and Salvadorans. Applicants must prove that they have lived in the United States continuously since the beginning of 1982. The acceptance rate so far is 90 percent. May 3, District of Columbia and Indiana primaries. 10, Nebraska and West Virginia primaries. 24, Idaho primary.

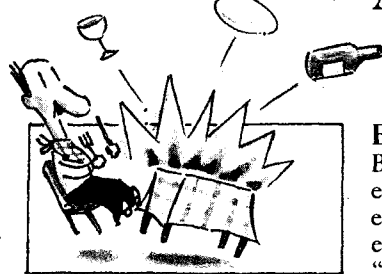


DEMOGRAPHICS

Owing to fine weather and high spirits, May is the month in which students are most likely to play hooky. What educators term recreational truancy also increases in September (because of extended summer vacations) and during the hunting and skiing seasons; at these times of year parents are often co-conspirators. But in May students almost always play hooky without parental sanction. According to a recent federal survey, 5.5 percent of American high school seniors miss 11 to 20 days of school a year for reasons other than illness.

THE SKIES

May 1, the first of two Full Moons this month; May Day is a cross-quarter day, with Earth midway between an equinox and a solstice. 3-4, the Eta Aquarid meteor shower is visible as Earth moves through some crumbs of Halley's Comet. 15, New Moon. 31, the second Full Moon of May; this one is known as the Planting, or Milk, Moon.

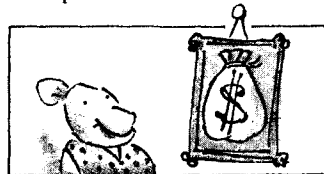


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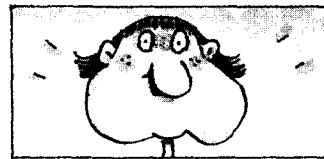
ARTS & LETTERS

May 1, a retrospective exhibition of some 200 of the works of Paul Gauguin, including 11 from the Soviet Union and several others that had long been presumed lost, to open at the National Gallery of Art, in Washington, D.C.; the exhibit will travel during the next year to Chicago and Paris. Ever since the first great "blockbuster" exhibit—the King Tut exhibit—opened at the National Gallery, in 1976, museums have been eager to cash in with publicity-rich extravaganzas that attract visitors who aren't usually museum-goers—or patrons of museum shops. The Gauguin exhibit may well be one of the last of these blockbusters: soaring art prices are outstripping the ability of museums to pay for insurance on borrowed works. By one measure—the Sotheby's Art Market Trends—the price of Old Masters paintings has risen by some 400 percent since 1970. The price of modern paintings (1900-1950) has increased by 1,200 percent. Museums do chip in together, but the larger the group, the greater the number of places the exhibit must visit—and the higher the insurance premiums.



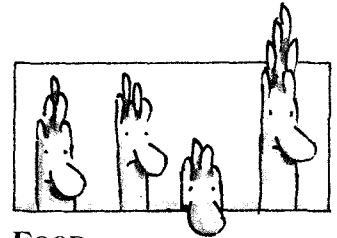
ENVIRONMENT

By May 1 offshore shrimp fishermen on the Gulf and southern Atlantic coasts must have equipped their trawl nets with "turtle excluder devices," or TEDs, which are designed to expel sea turtles out a hole in the net. Every year some 11,000 sea turtles are caught in shrimp nets and drowned; of the five species of sea turtle found in U.S. waters, all are endangered or threatened. For several years the National Marine Fisheries Service encouraged but did not require the use of TEDs; not surprisingly, the devices were little used. A lawsuit threatened by environmentalists against the Fisheries Service led to the deadline. Shrimpers complain that the TEDs will reduce the size of their catches, despite claims to the contrary by the Fisheries Service.



HEALTH & SAFETY

May is the last month of the prime season for mumps. The incidence of the disease has been on the rise in recent years: there were 2,982 cases in 1985, 7,790 in 1986, and (provisionally) 12,299 in 1987. Why the increase? The mumps vaccine, introduced in the late 1960s, when mumps cases numbered some 150,000 annually, was never adopted universally, but enough children were inoculated to disrupt the spread of the disease in many communities, thereby helping even those who did not receive the vaccine to avoid mumps. Many of the never-vaccinated are now adolescents and young adults, and mumps has become an illness to be reckoned with not only in the nation's grammar schools but in its colleges and universities as well. Mumps in adults can lead to encephalitis. Some 14 states still do not require mumps vaccination.

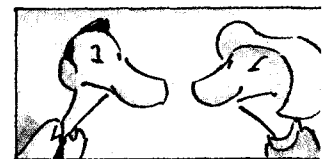


FOOD

More asparagus will be harvested (mostly in California, Michigan, and Washington) and eaten this month than in any other. Is it all right to eat asparagus with your fingers? According to Miss Manners, "Asparagus is, indeed, correctly eaten with the fingers, in a very old tradition of which few modern people seem aware." It used to be thought that, for some genetic reason, the methyl mercaptan produced by the digestion of asparagus gave rise to an odor in the urine of some eaters and not in that of others; it turns out, however, that the odor is produced by everyone and that, for some genetic reason, certain people just can't detect it.

50 YEARS AGO

Raoul de Roussy de Sales, writing about America in the May, 1938, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "Nowhere else can one find a people devoting so much time and so much study to the question of the relationship between men and women. Nowhere else is there such concern about the fact that this relationship does not always make for perfect happiness. The great majority of the Americans of both sexes seem to be in a state of chronic bewilderment in the face of a problem which they are certainly not the first to confront, but which—unlike other people—they still refuse to accept as one of those gifts of the gods which one might just as well take as it is: a mixed blessing at times and at other times a curse or merely a nuisance."



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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

THE BIKE

NOT LONG AGO a letter arrived for my son from a department of motor vehicles near the city of Berkeley, where he was in school. Because he had already gone back to college and the letter had been forwarded twice, I opened it and learned that he had incurred a speeding ticket weeks back that was still unpaid. More ominous, however, in the space marked "Make of Vehicle" there appeared the letters KAW. I am of an age where I still think of Kawasaki first as a builder of warplanes, but a warplane was not what Andrew had bought.

Hardly anyone is immune to the thrill of speed in some form or another, and in any event there comes a point with one's children where the chances of harm and the rewards of challenge must face each other in an uneasy standoff; but motorcycles simply scare me, and they are great producers of noise and inducers of brutishness besides. Still, I refrained from making an angry phone call. Instead, with affectionate guile, I wrote a low-key letter to my son, listing what little I know about motorcycles, pro and con: they can take you hundreds of miles on a few gallons of gas; they can slither through traffic jams and ride roughshod across fields and up forest trails; they are easy to service and cheap to insure; they often skid on highway curves loosely sprinkled with sand, on oil drippings from cars and trucks, and in a light rain; even skillful riders are frequently sideswiped; and even the best kind of helmet you can buy offers very little protection. My letter concluded with some dry and, I thought, devastating official statistics and one per-

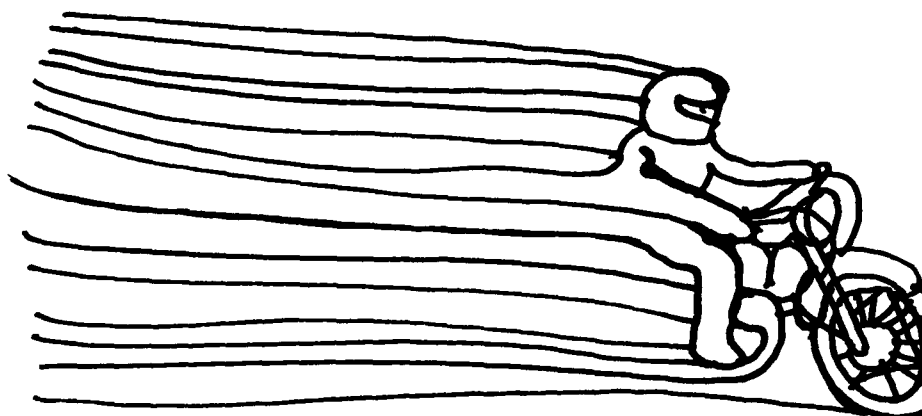
sonal observation: every friend or acquaintance of mine who rode a motorcycle ended up badly battered, or dead.

For more than a month I heard nothing from Andrew. Then one day came a long letter. "Motorcycles," he wrote. "The word grates, like calling a woman a female. They're bikes. They're mood machines. They're merely an extension of yourself, and when you become comfortable on one you almost forget it is there. On a bike you flow, the engine sound rising and falling like a sax, an overwhelming spring of raw power, tappable by a twist of the wrist. It is the feeling you have when holding a loaded and cocked twelve-gauge: wired tight, conscious of the potential, the delicate control over a force greater than the force of the self yet under the self's control.

"An electric pulse hurtles from brain to hand and the force is no longer potential. The gun booms, kicking back, the shot tearing through whatever you aim at; a quick, pained yelp as the meat on the back tire claws for a grip on the as-

phalt, then the Gs come in, your neck tightens to keep your head from snapping back, and you catch up and climb together. Higher and higher, another pulse to the left hand, instinctual, a quick flip of the left foot, up into second, and you're doing sixty. Two heartbeats. You're into third, fourth, fifth, each time the engine taking a breath before the next drawn-out, ascending howl. Eyes flick down, note speed and revs, flick back up, the dashes of the highway's center line flashing underneath. Time almost stops. The road is no longer stone. Speed is no longer perceived as velocity, no longer felt as motion. Mindless in a form of coma, yet more aware and alert than ever before, all your senses clamped wide open, pulling in a barrage of data, purging, filling, overwhelming.

"A sudden light rakes out of the trees in the distance, a car crossing, the driver either misjudges or doesn't see. Irrelevant details—it's in the road. Downshift three gears, clickclickclick, release the clutch, braking as hard as she can take it. The rear locks. The tire barks, sliding



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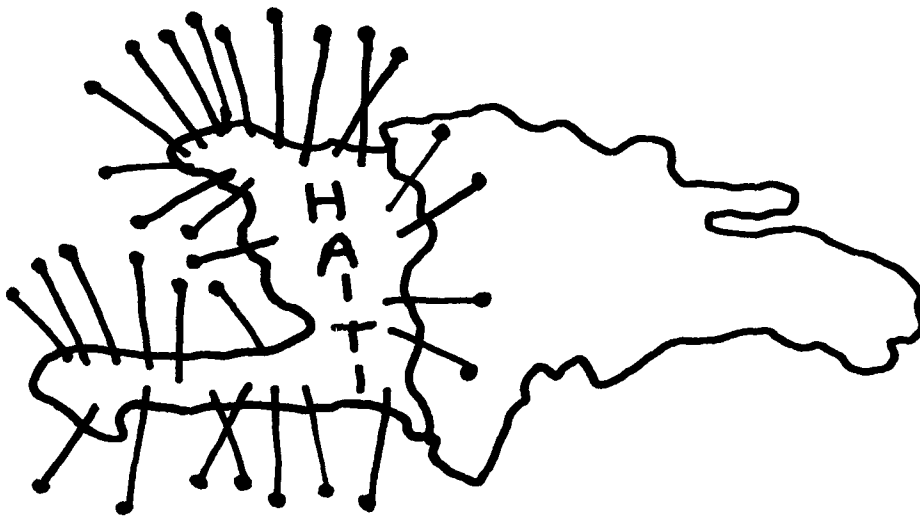
from the downshift and then the brake, and the engine roars with the pain of the revs. You drift sideways, the tire leaving a black scar on the road that will later look like a gentle S to a passerby. Slow motion sets in, as if you were becalmed in a dory, easing sleepily across a glassy pond. Then the car is passed. The huge and clumsy crate of steel has made it halfway across, and your right foot releases the frozen rear tire. You fish out of the slide, missing the rump of the car by a handspan. You upshift and continue, but five beats of your heart and the overdose reaches it, robbing it of the next two contractions, clenching it like a fist, making you take several deep breaths; then eases off, leaving you weak and drained.

"You ride on, riding it out. It is only

later, when you reach home, flip down the sidestand, give a last, affectionate twist and cut the engine, that the bond is severed. You climb off, feeling incomplete at first, then readjust and turn up the walk, leaving the bike to cool and breathe, immobile, helpless, waiting silently, forever if it has to, for its other half to return and resurrect it."

Shortly after sending this letter my son called to say that his motorcycle had been stolen and then somehow smashed up beyond repair. I had been hoping for a conclusion such as this, savoring in advance a moment of unalloyed elation. My actual reaction was certainly one of relief. But it was also more than a little tinged, I must confess, with an odd, vicarious sense of lost joy.

—Timothy Foote



HAITI

RETURN TO NORMALCY

The country's sorry reputation is safe for now

THERE WAS A time about a year ago when it seemed that the Haitians had accomplished something remarkable, putting behind them not just thirty years of the Duvalier family but a whole history of brutal political culture. And then the moment passed. Municipal elections scheduled for last July were called off by the transitional military government, the Conseil National du Gouvernement. A wave of murders and political assassinations, fomented by Duvalierists whose privileges were

threatened by the prospect of democracy, began in late summer and continued through the fall. In November the presidential election was canceled a few hours after the polls opened, amid nationwide intimidation of voters by the Tontons Macoutes, the terrorist paramilitary organization created by the Duvaliers. In response the United States cut off all non-humanitarian aid to Haiti, the poorest country in this hemisphere, hoping to pressure the CNG to disassociate itself from the Duvalierists. In January, Haiti finally held a national election, organized by the CNG. A fifty-seven-year-old political scientist, Leslie Manigat, was selected as the country's new President. The opposition put the turnout at about five percent of eligible voters, although the government reported a figure of 35 percent. The obvious absence of voter enthusiasm reflected the general perception that

the election's result was a foregone conclusion.

Manigat was the director of the School of International Studies at the University of Haiti and a close associate of François Duvalier's until, in 1960, he was charged with instigating a student strike at the university and was briefly jailed. He spent more than two decades in exile after that, teaching at Johns Hopkins University, the Paris Institute of Political Studies, the University of the West Indies, and, finally, Simon Bolivar University, in Caracas. While living in Venezuela he formed his own political party and mobilized a small army, with which he planned to invade Haiti. He returned home after Jean Claude Duvalier fled to France, in February of 1986. In a truly free vote Manigat's background as an exile and his intellectual credentials would probably have made him a plausible candidate. No one, however, could have won the January election without striking some sort of deal with the CNG. Whether Manigat will be the army's puppet remains to be seen. Pierre Bayard, the editor and publisher of the *Haiti Times*, told me recently that he thinks Manigat has a Machiavellian streak that may help him in bargaining with the army and with the Duvalierist element. But then what? "I know of his dictatorial character," an acquaintance of Manigat's in Port-au-Prince said. "At least from an intellectual standpoint he has a very good grasp of the country's problems, but he's totalitarian, very selfish. His theory is that popularity does not confer power but that power confers popularity. He makes me afraid."

The Haitian presidency has historically turned even reformers—like Papa Doc Duvalier—into corrupt tyrants. Indeed, Haitians have known little but autocracy and destitution since winning independence from France, in 1804. Beginning with the nation's first governor-general for life, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Haiti has been ruled by an almost uninterrupted procession of megalomaniacs. The government has nearly always been under the control of a small black military caste, even as Haiti's wealth has been in the hands of a small Francophile mulatto elite; most of the rest of the population has lived in poverty in the countryside. The virtual absence of a usable national past is symbolized by the numerous street signs in Port-au-Prince bearing the names of famous foreigners: avenue John Brown, avenue Martin Luther King, boulevard Harry Truman, rue

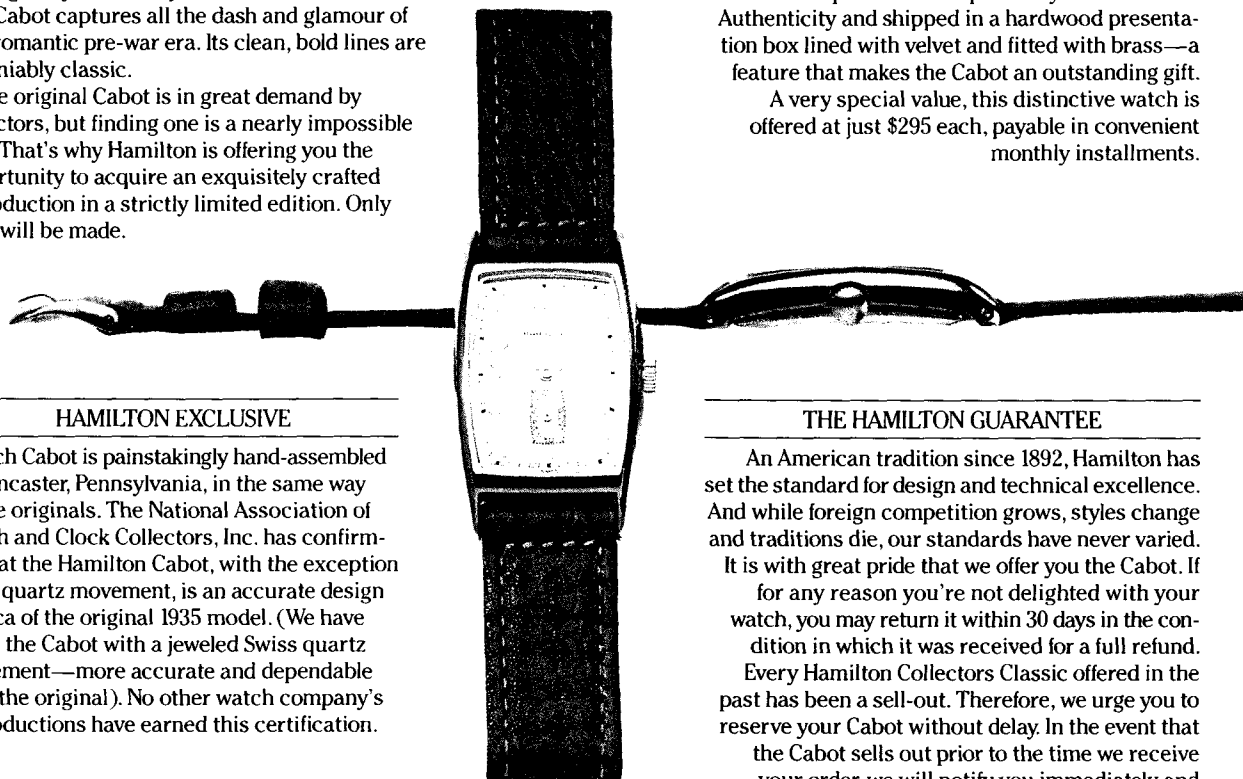
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The Creole word that Haitians use to describe the removal of Jean Claude—*dechoukaj*, which means “to uproot”—suggests how well they understand the need to make a fundamental change in the character of the country. After Duvalier’s departure, everybody who was gotten rid of—members of the government, members of the Tontons Macoutes, voodoo priests, personal enemies—was said to have been *dechouké*. But the eviction of Jean Claude did not signify a larger uprooting. The government apparatus—the ministries, the bureaucracy, the military, the courts—substantially remained in the hands of the same people who ran the government under the old regime. “Don’t use the word *revolution*,” a political analyst at the U.S. embassy said of the *dechoukaj*. “It was simply a transfer of power.”

AN OLD CREOLE proverb says, “The constitution is paper, bayonets are steel.” Practically speaking, the military is the only law in Haitian communities, where there is no distinction between the army and the police; indeed, even the local fire brigades are part of the army.

One day last year I was driving up to the port city of Gonaives. Just beyond the town of Cabaret, formerly Duvalierville, the road was blocked by what I assumed was one of the impromptu tolls that Haitian villages set up to extort a little money from passing drivers. A soldier stood in the road, gripping his rifle. As I slowed to a stop I saw that it was not a toll at all. Behind the soldier a man lay dead on his stomach, in a pool of blood. His eyes were wide open; he seemed to be staring at some point down the road behind me. The soldier pointed his rifle and spoke sharply in Creole, ordering me to move on. I never found out what happened, but what has stayed with me about the incident was how it seemed to represent the horrible dailiness of violence in Haiti—most of which is perpetrated by the military or by the Macoutes, who were officially disbanded after the *dechoukaj* but still operate as a mercenary army employed by the Duvalierists.

Haiti’s economy, like its politics, is characterized by chaos. There is still some manufacturing around Port-au-Prince—baseballs and basic clothing are mainstays—but the work force in Haiti is so unskilled and the country so unsta-

ble that foreign investment has ceased. The leeward side of the law offers an opportunity for some. Jean Claude Duvalier’s father-in-law, the notorious Ernest Bennett, pioneered the use of Haiti as a transshipment point for cocaine on its way from Colombia to the United States; with the departure of Duvalier the drug trade has if anything increased. It is an open secret that influential members of the army and the government have ties to the American Mafia and are laundering drug money by using it to finance a thriving traffic in contraband consumer goods. Colonel Jean-Claude Paul, the commander of the army’s largest battalion and a man who is said to have played a principal role in coordinating last November’s election-day terrorism, was indicted in March by a grand jury in Miami for narcotics trafficking. Meanwhile, criminals in the United States are using Haiti to ship American goods to countries that for one reason or another are embargoed under U.S. law: guns to Libya and South Africa, computer equipment to the Soviet Union. “Here it’s open borders,” says Antoine Izmary, one of Haiti’s leading food importers and a vocal opponent of smuggling. “You can steal anything and bring it to Haiti and send it to anywhere.” With virtually no navy and a tiny air force, Haiti cannot police its borders.

Until its eclipse by the electoral chaos that began last June, smuggling was the hottest topic in Haiti. Since the end of 1986 smuggled consumer goods have been flooding into the country; according to some estimates, as much as half of all the goods being sold on the street are contraband. In Port-au-Prince, for example, the sidewalks of the busy shopping streets around boulevard Dessalines are crammed with electric fans, most of which are assumed to have been smuggled in from Panama and Jamaica. Out in the countryside peasants on bicycles are now a common sight, whereas as recently as two years ago such a thing was hardly ever seen. The bikes are stolen by organized rings in the United States, shipped down from Miami, and smuggled through a provincial port like Gonaives. The retail price is about \$30 a bike. This open trade in contraband keeps consumer prices artificially low and creates tens of thousands of jobs in the black market. But it is also beggaring the national treasury, driving legitimate retailers out of business, and crippling whole sectors of the national economy.

The most damaging smuggled imports are of basic commodities like rice, flour, sugar, and cooking oil, in all of which Haiti has attempted to become self-sufficient. Bootleg rice illustrates the problem. Rice is a staple of the Haitian diet, and the smuggled variety, nicknamed “Miami Rice,” sells for far less than domestically produced rice, enabling Haitians to eat rice more often. However, rice is an important cash crop in the Artibonite Valley, one of the few fertile areas left in the country, and the takeover of the market by contraband has had a ruinous effect on farmers there.

Smuggling certainly existed under the Duvaliers, especially in luxury consumer goods like scotch and cigarettes. What is different now is the openness with which customs evasion takes place and, more important, the volume of goods coming into the country. “You don’t have to have friends,” Izmary said. “You just give the customs inspector some money. It’s open. There is a lot of stolen merchandise coming down here from the States. You will find a brand of Libby’s luncheon meat that sells for twenty-one dollars a case in the States selling down here for fifteen or sixteen dollars. It’s stolen.”

THE UNITED STATES has been a presence in Haiti since 1915, when the country was invaded by U.S. Marines in order to guarantee the repayment of Haiti’s debts to American creditors and also to keep the deepwater port at Môle Saint Nicholas from being leased to Germany. The nineteen-year U.S. occupation that followed was a very mixed blessing for Haiti. Some consider the period one of the only times in the country’s history when it enjoyed anything like enlightened rule. The experience was nevertheless humiliating, and the animosity remains. Haitians today cannot help feeling the gravitational pull of the United States, although the French and Canadian governments also have a degree of influence. The United States has for years been their most generous foreign benefactor—before the aid reduction last fall, U.S. assistance had been about \$100 million a year. The U.S. mission in Port-au-Prince is said to operate with an unusual degree of independence, because the State Department is preoccupied with developments in Central America. The events of the past year could suggest that the embassy was caught off guard, through either neglect or naiveté. It is hard to find evi-



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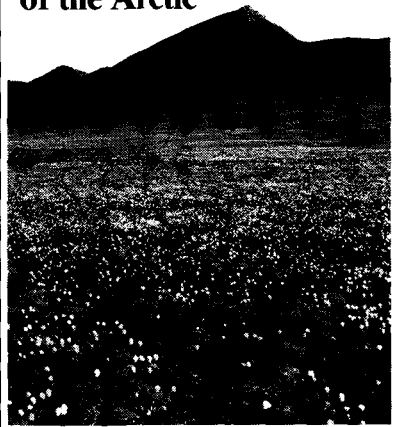
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dence that the U.S. government took an active role in maintaining the army in power, though many Haitians believe that it did. Haitians see the hand of the United States behind everything that happens in their country, and many consider the U.S. embassy to be a virtual parallel government in Port-au-Prince. "We're accused of any number of things," Linda Morse, the deputy director in Port-au-Prince for the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), told me. "We're accused of trying to kill domestic agriculture and put everyone into factories to make baseballs for the United States. We're accused of killing all the pigs. We're accused of in general not caring, not listening, not understanding true Haitian needs. We even reached the point where someone claimed that the trees we planted were killer trees that were sucking up all the nutrients from the soil. And then the Marines would come to protect the trees."

The pigs that Morse referred to have for the past ten years been one of the touchiest issues between the U.S. mission and most Haitians. In the late 1970s an epidemic of African swine fever swept through the Creole pig population. Because of fear that the disease would spread to the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, and perhaps even to North America, nearly every pig in Haiti was slaughtered. There is much disagreement about who actually pressed for the extermination program, but Americans, Canadians, Dominicans, and Haitians were all somehow involved in implementing it. The program affected almost every peasant family, or about three quarters of all families in the country. When it ended, in 1984, a repopulation effort got under way using breeds of pigs not indigenous to Haiti. Creole pigs were hardy and foraged for what they ate. The new pigs—often derisively referred to as "Iowa pigs"—require a level of care and a diet that would be the envy of the average Haitian. Some 27,000 pigs have been imported as breeding stock to replace the one million that were killed, but Haitians haven't been able to maintain them all and have slaughtered many for food. AID is at pains to point out that the eradication program was an international effort, but the average Haitian sees it as an American initiative, one whose real objective was to open up the Haitian market for American hog farmers.

Economic policy in Haiti, or at least economic policy as it is pursued by foreign development agencies, assumes that Haiti's economic future lies in agriculture. But the land has been ravished. Hispaniola was once the most naturally blessed of all the Caribbean islands—"the pearl of the Antilles." But the pressures of population—on average, there are some 580 people per square mile in Haiti—have worn out the land on the western, or Haitian, half of Hispaniola. Deforestation is a serious problem throughout the Third World, but in Haiti the condition is in its terminal stage. During the 1920s some 60 percent of Haiti's land was under forest cover. Today the figure is two percent. In 1987 a report on Haiti's ecology which was funded by AID observed that "few countries in the world face a more serious threat to their own survival from environmental catastrophe than Haiti."

It has been a long time since Haiti was an exporter of timber. Seen from the air, the mountains resemble the furrowed brows of a crowd of bald-headed men. The absence of trees affects rainfall patterns, inducing drought; the prevailing color of the landscape is a powdery beige. Haiti loses about a million tons of topsoil to erosion every year, and from the sky one can see how this silts up the rivers. Drought and silted rivers wreak havoc with the country's electrical system, which relies heavily on hydropower. On some days the power level is so low that factory machinery must be shut down, and blackouts are common.

The main reason for Haiti's deforestation is that wood, especially in the form of charcoal, provides 85 percent of the country's energy for heating and cooking. Wood and charcoal are important cash crops for Haitian peasants; the smell of charcoal is always somewhere in the air. Foreign development agencies plant about 10 million trees a year in Haiti. Half of them die and most of the others are chopped down before they reach maturity.

Such shortsighted land use is commonly cited as an example of what is fundamentally wrong with the way Haitians think and act. But it also illustrates the difficulty of changing behavior that may be less a product of ignorance than a natural response to real conditions. Finding enough food to eat and enough fuel to cook it is a daily struggle in the countryside, and the urgency of this struggle overwhelms the logic in planting trees for the future, or in letting land

lie fallow to restore itself, or in sowing crops that can't be harvested for five months. Another problem is the tradition of tiny landholdings, which are less efficient than larger, cooperative farms would be. But a long-standing claim to a small parcel of land is the most valuable thing that many families have. And they cling to a tradition of widely dispersed land ownership in a country where record-keeping is at best haphazard and where the legal system is corrupt.

IN THE SPIRIT of regeneration that followed Duvalier's flight, Haitians were constantly talking about *mentalité*. The idea was that turning the country around would require Haitians to change their behavior and their beliefs. The goal was sometimes called a "*dechoukaj* of the mind." Lawrence E. Harrison, a development expert who spent twenty years directing programs for AID in Latin America, said of Haiti when I spoke with him not long ago, "It's a country very largely without structures or institutions, and the few that do exist are in the hands of the government. The Church is an alternative, but it's far from a satisfactory one." Furthermore, Harrison said, the culture's values, ingrained since the time of slavery, are "anti-progressive." "On top of this is voodoo," he added. Voodoo, in his opinion at least, "basically teaches that what happens in the world is a consequence of the capricious acts of several hundred very capricious spirits." Harrison's opinion is a common one among North Americans and Europeans, and it frequently puts them at odds with Haitian intellectuals. Even Harrison concedes that voodoo may help people on the margin of survival to keep going.

Educated Haitians commonly say that there is scarcely a problem in Haiti that does not somehow come down to questions of *mentalité*. The army, it is said, has a *mentalité* that understands only force and admits no concept of civil rights. Smuggling is attributed to a *mentalité* that confuses democracy with ignoring the law and doing whatever one likes. Paranoia and suspicion are said to be key elements of the popular world view. Under the Duvaliers fear ran so deep that people were afraid to speak the ruling family's name. Even now people stumble on the name Duvalier. When they talk of the past, they use locutions like "Before February 7" and "Under the old government." If they do say "Duvalier," they appear very self-

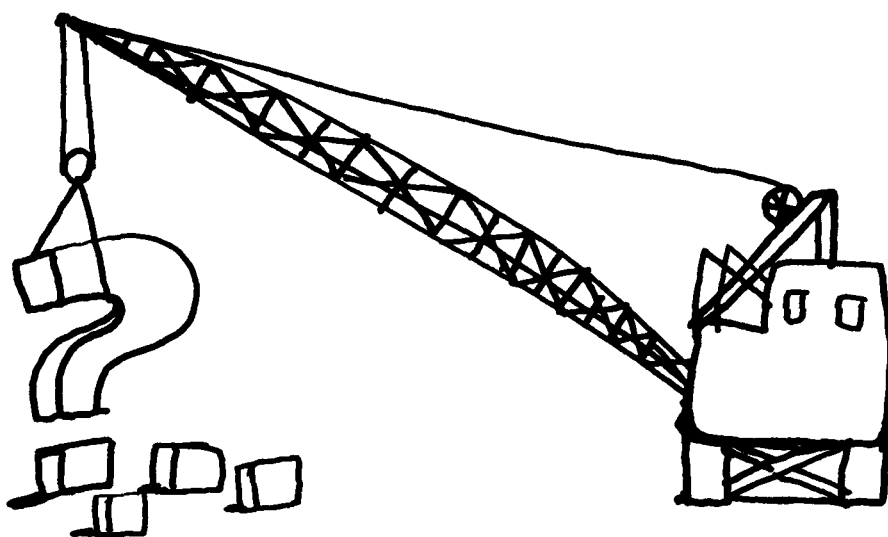
conscious about doing so; one half expects them to cross themselves. George Celcis, a Haitian businessman, described the outlook of his countrymen this way: "We are like people who are handicapped, like people who have polio."

It would be wrong to give the impression that there are no positive elements in Haiti's national life these days. There are a few. Since the flight of Jean Claude Duvalier an aggressive and independent press has thrived. On the radio—the most powerful medium in Haiti—religious groups have mounted an ambitious effort at *l'éducation civique*. It is estimated that one million Haitians left the country during the Duvalier period; some of them are returning home with

new skills and new ways of thinking. Above all, the Haitian people, though exhausted by the events of the past year, are committed to the idea of democracy. Their hope is pervasive, and is immediately apparent to every visitor.

But so is everything that makes Haiti so discouraging. About 120 babies die for every thousand that are born, and still the population is expected to double within thirty years. Nearly 80 percent of all Haitians are illiterate. Sanitation is primitive and malnutrition a way of life. Haiti is a country that needs so much—it needs just about everything—and no one seems equal to the task of putting it right.

—Kevin McDermott



TRADE BLUES IN THE GULF

*The seaports along the
Gulf of Mexico gambled on expanding
north-south trade, and lost*

IN THE PAST eight years the once mighty ports of the U.S. Gulf Coast have become sick sisters of the American economy. For Tampa, Pensacola, Mobile, Gulfport, Pascagoula, New Orleans, Beaumont—Orange—Port Arthur, Galveston, Houston, Corpus Christi, and Brownsville the eighties barely boomed—and the bell may be tolling for some of them in the coming decade. Pensacola, the oldest seaport in the United States, now ships primarily foreign-aid food bound for the Third World. A Pensacola citizens' advisory

commission at one point recommended that the city face facts and consider closing down port operations altogether.

The Port of Mobile, which lies at the geographic nexus of the most ambitious waterway-development project ever undertaken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—the \$1.7 billion, 234-mile Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway—expanded grain and coal operations in anticipation of the Tenn-Tom's opening. Two years later it is facing slow world markets in both commodities, and waterfront acreage that had been slated for grain and coal is being developed for use by the Navy in its home-porting plan. New Orleans, long the undisputed queen of Gulf ports, has lost 5,500 of its 7,000 stevedore jobs. In 1986 the longshore labor contract for the Gulf region contained givebacks for the first time ever. "We're pallbearers at our own funeral," one New Orleans labor leader has said.

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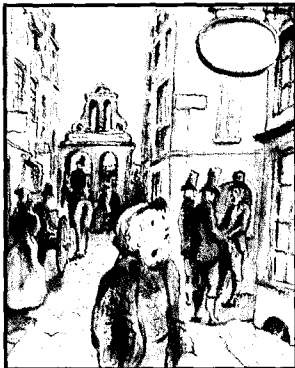
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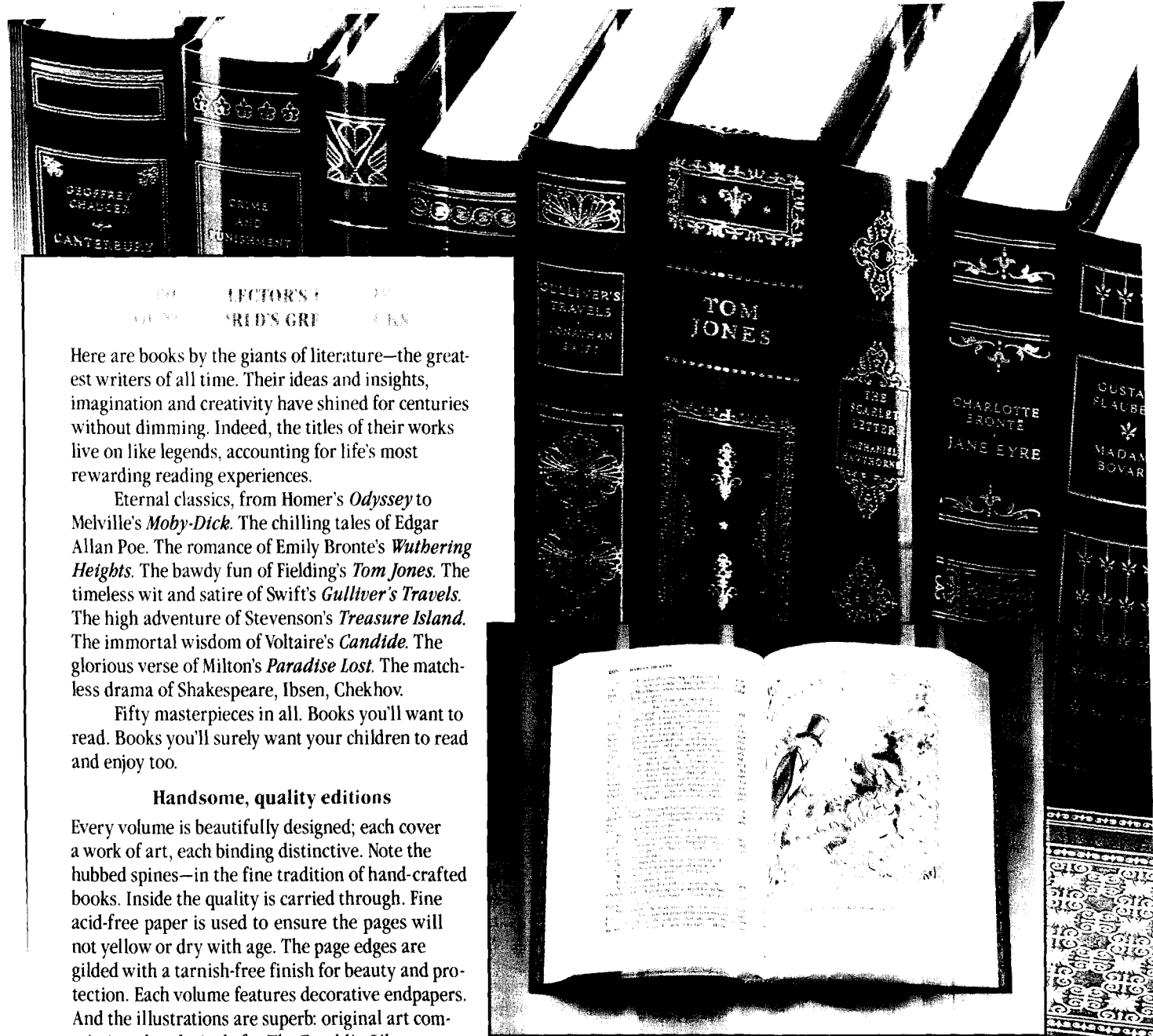
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the high dollar was almost universally cited by shippers, port officials, and trade unionists as a major cause of the Gulf Coast's sagging fortunes. A lower dollar, they maintained, would start American exports flowing through Gulf ports—and events have partly borne out their hopes. Today cheaper American exports are contributing to a sense that at least the depression in the ports won't get any worse. "We've taken a severe beating on the Gulf," John Dutton, Alabama's state docks director, admits. "Now it's like we hit bottom, rolled over, and can see the sky again. We're not reaching out to touch it yet; but there has been some improvement."

Yet the painful truth for the Gulf Coast is that the cost of goods is only one factor in a deep structural downturn that is unlikely to reverse itself. The former shipyard workers wandering the streets of Gulf Coast cities, the laid-off long-shoremen on trains and buses headed north, the unemployable sailors living out of their cars, are visible symbols of a region at risk of slipping into economic lethargy. To understand the roots of the hard times on the Gulf, we have to know something about how modern ports operate.

AS BUSINESS ENTITIES, seaport facilities are too volatile for direct capital investment by the private sector. The course of maritime trade—which makes up 95 percent by weight of American overseas imports and exports—depends on so many unknowns that only public enterprises are willing to form the capital to construct the necessary industrial infrastructure. Our ports have evolved as an American variety of mixed enterprise, in which high-risk, low-profit transport complexes compete against one another in the public sector. However, ports are operated not only to make profits but also to service their regional economies and to create jobs in the port cities.

The "port authority" movement began at the turn of the century. It was originally the Progressive movement's answer to the private ownership of most of the nation's wharves. Since 1946 these public authorities have raised some \$5 billion to build what are essentially industrial behemoths. The establishment of port authorities was particularly important in pulling the sleepy Gulf Coast out of the Great Depression—bringing one of the most backward parts of the nation into the Ameri-

can mainstream. The ports, in turn, were significant in winning the Second World War. A large proportion of the supplies bound for Europe during the war left from Gulf Coast docks.

The growth of the Gulf ports during the war, however, was puny compared with the expansion of the past two decades. Today a modern port complex may operate or lease fifty to a hundred wharves, along with associated warehouses and yards, some specially designed for container ships, others for traditional break-bulk goods (the loose cargo on wooden pallets of *On the Waterfront*); gigantic cranes and bigger gantries for loading bulk materials onto freighters; roll-on, roll-off facilities, at which chains of tractor-trailers deposit their containers directly into cargo holds; LASH ("lighter aboard ship") vessels that can hold barges stacked like dominoes; railroad terminals through which thousands of coal cars can move at a time; vast truckyards; mammoth grain elevators; foreign-trade zones for warehousing imports; shipyards, dry docks, and tugboat stations; special facilities for loading and storing petroleum; special facilities for handling scrap metals; special facilities for bananas. The Port of Tampa has an \$830,000 "juice berth" used for piping in semifrozen citrus-juice slush.

The cost and time involved in constructing such pharaonic public works are monumental. In the past ten years alone the Alabama state docks in Mobile have invested \$230 million to upgrade their facilities. The Port of Houston, the nation's third largest seaport, is currently involved in a five-year, \$355 million channel-dredging project. After investing heavily in up-to-date refrigerated and containerized facilities, Gulfport was forced to go to the Mississippi Legislature last year in an effort to get additional funding.

Although ports do not produce any goods themselves, their economic impact is enormous, and no Gulf Coast city can face the possibility of a port shutdown with equanimity. By 1980, for example, the Port of Tampa was contributing more than \$500 million annually to the local economy. The Port of Houston generates some 35,000 jobs. In New Orleans every ton of cargo moving through the port brings \$73 into the local economy. Ironically, public perception of the economic significance of Gulf ports stops about thirty miles inland in most Gulf Coast states. Inlanders tend to

think of the ports as vaguely exotic and dangerous places, where people of Spanish, French, and Afro-Caribbean heritage hold pagan Mardi Gras rites. Culturally, people from Tampa, Mobile, and New Orleans are not like other Floridians, Alabamans, and Louisianans. They may seem like other southerners on the surface, but they are more like each other than like the rest of their respective states' residents. They have the tropical Gulf in their rhythm and the port of call in their blood. Their interests would probably be strengthened by becoming a separate state.

The fundamental problem for port authorities is deciding what facilities to build—and, as important, when to build them. James Pugh, the executive director of the Port of Houston Authority, says, "Ports have to make long-term construction decisions in a short-term trade environment. The trade the Gulf anticipated and started building for in the 1970s just didn't arrive in the eighties. That's the port economic environment: you have either too much capacity or not enough. The name of the game is to keep adding elephants to your string but not get caught with any white ones."

ALTHOUGH CONTAINERS for shipping had been used before the Vietnam War, it was the American military's shipping large amounts of war materiel to Southeast Asia on contract carriers that accelerated the tremendous technological change. In its bid for this trade Sea-Land Corporation, one of the largest American shipping lines, guaranteed twenty-two-day delivery to Southeast Asia. By shipping everything in standardized thirty-five-foot containers, Sea-Land could load and unload with giant cranes, doing in less than twenty-four hours what had previously taken stevedore gangs days to do. Since Sea-Land ships had empty cargo holds on the trip back to the United States, they began to call at ports in Japan, Korea, and Hong Kong to pick up a return cargo. Sea-Land initiated containerized trade with Asia and in the process became one of the largest container-ship companies in the world.

Containerized cargo ships were soon followed by a variety of much larger, highly specialized, automated vessels that have all but replaced general cargo freighters: supertankers, drybulk carriers, refrigerator ships, LASH vessels. As this trend continues into the twenty-first

century, essentially all cargo-handling will be mechanized.

As these container carriers and specialized ships came into service, the sudden and enormous economies of scale they introduced just about wiped out the American shipbuilding industry, decimated the merchant marine, and caused economic chaos in the ports.

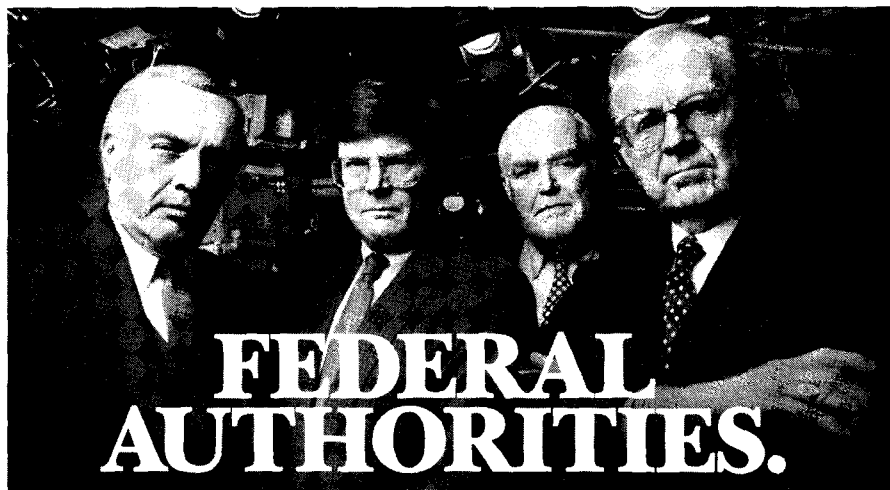
Break-bulk cargo went the way of daytime baseball. "In the old days ten gangs of longshoremen unloaded a typical six-thousand-ton cargo carrier at thirty tons an hour," says Jim McClelland, the president of the International Longshoremen's Association New Orleans Local 1497. "Now one gang of men can unload fourteen hundred tons an hour. The typical seabee unloads, loads, and leaves in one day, using five percent of the labor in terms of hours worked." A smaller number of vastly larger ships has resulted in intense competition among ports of call. Increased competition has led to price-cutting, labor strife, and budget manipulation.

The containerization and specialization of vessels tied in closely with the 1970s boom in world trade. With Japanese and European exports to the United States burgeoning, the profitable new containerized trade routes formed along east-west geographic axes. Ports like Los Angeles on the Asian trade route and New York on the European trade route took great leaps forward in technology, cargo volume, and revenues.

After the oil crisis of 1973, when commercial banks began recycling oil dollars to the Third World, Latin America—especially Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and Venezuela—seemed about to take off economically. The expectation along the Gulf was that a north-south trade route would therefore develop, and that the Gulf ports, because of their location, would get most of the resulting business.

In the event, the Gulf's share of the expansion in world trade was mainly in grain sold to the Soviet bloc and China. In 1972–1973 world grain trade stood at 126 million metric tons. As détente brought the Russians and the Chinese into American markets to an unprecedented extent, one port after another constructed giant grain movers. By 1979–1980, at the crest of the export wave, world grain trade had jumped to 185 million metric tons.

The United States captured a third of



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that increase. By the time the expansion of capacity was finished, the Gulf ports could handle over a million metric tons a week. Then the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was followed by President Carter's grain embargo; détente and the grain trade collapsed together.

"If the past few years have taught us anything, it's this: food is not a weapon," Patrick Harmon, of Cargill, Inc., a major American grain shipper, said in a speech to other shippers in 1983. "Embargoes of farm products simply are not effective foreign-policy tools." Harmon pointed out that while the U.S. government was busy creating roadblocks to trade, Argentina, Canada, and the European Economic Community moved in on the market share abdicated by the United States. Even with a lower dollar, U.S. agricultural exports are unlikely to begin growing again as rapidly as they did in the 1970s.

Plummeting wheat sales and closing grain movers were only the beginning of the Gulf's problems. Then came the international debt crisis. As the dollar waxed in strength, the prices of traditional Latin American export commodities plunged and Latin American economic growth ended abruptly. Unable to keep up their debt payments, Latin nations could barely pay for essential imports.

The maritime industry on the Gulf, even though it was long accustomed to Latin boom-and-bust cycles, entered a slide so steep that recovery may prove impossible. Some steamship lines operating chiefly along north-south routes have become "zombies," the president of Columbus Line, Erwin Ludwig, told the *Journal of Commerce*. "These shipping companies are not there for shipping or transport, but to maintain the balance sheets of the banks" unwilling to write off losses, he said.

INSTEAD OF MOVING to resolve the debt issue, the Reagan Administration offered its Caribbean Basin Initiative. Presented with great fanfare in 1982 as the most dramatic effort ever undertaken to spur Caribbean economic growth and prevent the encroachment of communism in the Americas, the CBI provided for twelve years of duty-free access to American markets for a wide range of products, as an incentive for investment in, and expanded export production from, the designated nations in the region. The key to the plan was to

be the strong encouragement of new and nontraditional exports—just what the Gulf ports needed.

Six years later the results of the CBI have been underwhelming. The Caribbean Basin has proved unattractive to American investment, because it lacks both the industrial and the financial infrastructure that governments must establish before economies can begin rapid growth. The region's chronic political instability and military struggles during the Reagan years have not been selling points either. Belying the high expectations with which the program was launched, U.S. investment in the Caribbean has not surged, and Caribbean exports to the United States have dropped by more than 30 percent since the inception of the CBI, from \$9.5 billion in 1983 to \$6.6 billion in 1986, mainly because of the drop in traditional export commodity prices and a successful campaign by the U.S. sugar lobby to slash quotas.

What CBI growth has taken place has resulted from Asian investors, who have flocked to the Caribbean Basin to set up light manufacturing operations inside the CBI wall. But the Port of Miami, with its dynamic Cuban business community, has taken most of this trade away from the Gulf. From Tampa to Texas, the Gulf Coast cities at best have ignored the trade opportunities inherent in the surge of immigrants from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. They have done little to integrate Hispanic business communities into trade-development programs, or to build tourism or transport and commercial ties with their CBI neighbors.

As if hard times weren't hard enough, the deregulation of the transportation and common-carrier industry dealt yet another severe blow to the Gulf ports. Under the new rules companies previously limited to operating one form of transportation could and did merge with or acquire companies in other forms. Deregulated carriers were soon operating intermodal fleets of trucks, trains, and barges. The advantage was in being able to move cargo among several different modes of transport. Rationalizing inland transport allowed carriers to offer shippers discounted "through" rates from point of origin to destination.

"Deregulation changed the whole pattern of shipping," Jim McClelland, of the International Longshoremen's Association, explains. "Where you used to have ships making calls at all the ports

along the Gulf for a few days each to pick up cargo, now the cargo is put on wheels and goes anywhere. Instead of the ship going to the cargo, with intermodalism the cargo goes to the ship."

McClelland and others lament that Gulf Coast businessmen, caught flat-footed by the container revolution, proved equally unprepared for deregulation. "The sons of the wealthy families who have handled shipping in ports like New Orleans and Mobile for a hundred years sat on their asses and didn't deal with rationalization of transport," McClelland says. "We just didn't move ahead. In Texas they've got a forward-thinking business community. That's why Houston is surviving while New Orleans is looking for pallbearers."

After the initial shock of deregulation the Port of Houston fought back with an intermodal Latin American "mini-land-bridge" strategy of its own creation. The Port of Houston Authority negotiated with rail and trucking firms to form relatively fast, efficient, economic overland links with California and the rest of the West Coast. This meant that shipping lines servicing the American West and Latin America could use the Port of Houston to avoid expensive trips through the Panama Canal. Selling Gulf Coast Houston as the gateway to California has proved highly successful, however improbable it may seem geographically. With cooperation from labor to make work rules more flexible and reduce costs, the Port of Houston has been able to overcome the double jeopardy of the regional oil recession and the slump in shipping.

At the same time, Houston has been at the forefront of technological change in the ports industry. Its Barbour's Cut container facility is considered the most efficient in the nation.

At present Houston is seeking to corner the Gulf market in agricultural products by automating traditionally labor-intensive break-bulk operations. The new device it is introducing, called a spiralveyor, is a conveyor belt that moves boxed fruit and produce off ships and bagged agricultural exports onto ships. At a projected cost of \$110 million, \$80 million of it raised in a joint venture with a private firm, the spiralveyor could bring an additional 300 ships a year to Houston—and perhaps wipe out agricultural shipping in the other Gulf Coast ports.

Houston's revival can be attributed in part to the use of strategic planning as

the port's main management tool. That is, it has a systematic economic blueprint providing port managers, government officials, and the public with information and alternatives relevant to future decisions. The goal of strategic planning is to avoid the 1970s syndrome of "building tomorrow for yesterday's needs."

These projections indicate that intensified competition, and the competitive edge possessed by larger-scale operations, are going to result over the next twenty years in fewer, larger, "load center" ports, or hubs, and a continuing decline in mid-size and small ports. Some ports will have to specialize in shipping local products, finding market niches through export-trade assistance, if they are to survive. Oil-patch ports, such as those of Texas's Golden Triangle (Beaumont, Orange, and Port Arthur), now 90 percent dependent on oil shipments, are being warned to diversify, in order to minimize the impact of sharp swings in the petroleum business. Still, some Gulf Coast wharves will almost certainly end up as posh condo complexes, hotels, and mixed-use tourist facilities. Although few admit it publicly, port directors say privately that some Gulf ports, as ports, will likely close—but not theirs.

What no amount of strategizing can change is the Gulf's geography, facing south toward the Caribbean Basin and Latin America. The decline of the Gulf ports is an example of a larger new reality—that the United States is no longer a stand-alone economy. The future of port cities like Brownsville and Mobile has at least as much to do with what happens in Mexico City and Buenos Aires as it does with what happens in Dallas and Birmingham.

"The Gulf ports will bounce back when Central America and South America come into economic flower," says Ron Brinson, the director of the New Orleans Port Authority. "Our future is on the north-south trade axis. It's just a matter of time before the Latin American economies take off."

BUT ALTHOUGH THE Gulf's prospects may be tied to Latin American stability, a resolution of the debt crisis, and even renewed détente to open the potentially vast consumer markets in the Soviet bloc, regional political parochialism remains strong. Not one Gulf Coast political figure seriously talks up trade-based national policies to lead the region

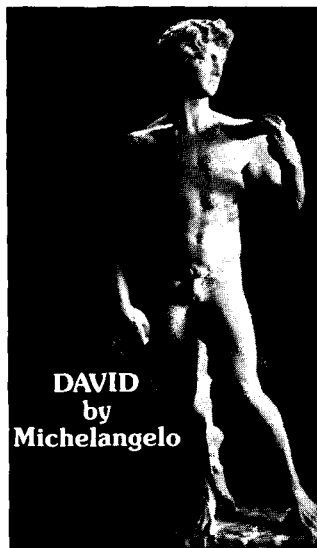
out of the morass. Instead of enlightened debate on the attractive possibilities of export expansion, attention is focused on restricting imports and on American naval power. "If some demagogue gets up there tomorrow and says going to war with Nicaragua would save jobs along the Gulf, I firmly believe most people would go for it," a local AFL-CIO officer says. "You'd need some sort of political messiah to get even people whose jobs are threatened to rally behind a foreign policy that talks about trade with Communists and not destabilizing Latin America. You don't need to look for any sudden outbreak of enlightened self-interest on the Gulf Coast."

Hopes for economic resurrection are pinned instead on the Navy's home-porting program, the most ambitious naval-port expansion since the Second World War. Packaged as an economic-development scheme in order to win support for building the Navy's 600-ship fleet from congressional committee members, home-porting sent the ailing Gulf cities into a frenzy of avidity for the Navy's ships, bases, and payrolls. The program was expected to generate 14,000 military and civilian jobs and \$350 million a year in revenues.

As competition to become home ports heated up, the Navy announced a "something for everybody" plan to spread a twenty-nine-ship package among nine Gulf Coast cities (now reduced to twenty-seven ships among six cities). In a classic combination of preparing for the last war and pork-barrel politicking, Navy officials spoke of a "convergence" between strategic dispersal of the Gulf fleet to forestall another Pearl Harbor and their desire to broaden congressional support for the naval buildup. When the Navy announced its basing decisions, in 1985, two of the most economically hard-pressed Gulf ports came out the big winners: Corpus Christi was awarded the battleship *Wisconsin* surface-action group, and Pensacola got an aircraft carrier.

There was a high ante. The Navy asked local and state governments to contribute a total of \$130 million toward purchasing and preparing waterfront sites for designated home ports. Gulf Coast cities are ascending to a higher realm of hock, in the hope that if food is not a weapon, maybe weapons will turn out to be food.

—Jonathan Maslow



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VANNA KARENINA

BY FRANK GANNON

HAPPY, PERKY FACES are all the same. Unhappy, unperky faces are all different.

It was clear to Vanna, as she looked at the contestants, that they were a hideous, loathsome lot. Not one had anything to be happy or perky about. Vanna thought about these things, and bubbled and smiled.

An accountant from Encino got "Free Spin." Vanna thought that it would be interesting to ask him just what he thought this meant. Could it save him from his miserable life as an accountant in Encino? Did he actually think that? She stared at him and clapped as she had these thoughts.

Vanna thought as she strode across the letter platform in a green flounced drop-shoulder gown by Mackie. She turned around and turned the lighted letter, which proved to be the letter R.

R, she thought. Why "R" we born? She could not conceive of a position in which life would not be a misery. We all must suffer, she thought. That is the condition of life. Yet we never acknowledge that; we just go on living our futile lives. Yet, when one sees the truth, who is one to tell? What is one to do?

Walk over to the puzzle platform and turn a letter around. And that is just what Vanna did.

She thought of the many people in her life: SER — Y IV — VITCH, KATA — OV, KOZN — EV. All had meant so much before, when they had won the right to come back. Some of them had come back for three whole days! Now Vanna could feel nothing for them. They were just like other pathetic, hopeless human wretches, like so much patio furniture with large price tags.

Vanna had seen so many contestants: teachers, doctors, lawyers, housewives, hoedown announcers, city cops. Vanna seemed to see their histories, all the crannies of their souls, as if she were

turning on a light in their innermost beings. She knew everything. She had seen everything there was to see about humanity: how some would keep their extra money on account even though an attractive curio cabinet was still available, how some would have the puzzle solved and yet continue to spin the wheel out of sheer naked human greed. Greed, mendacity, really bad taste in clothing, bad spelling, she had seen it all. She had looked deep into the bowels of evil, smiled broadly, and bubbled.

She thought of the day she had first

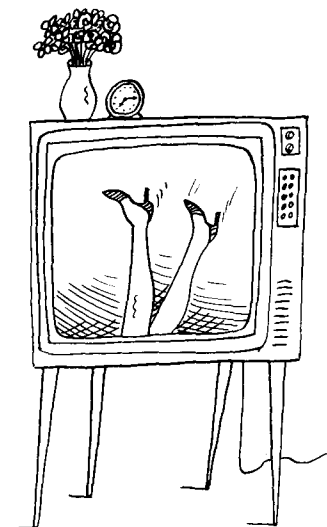
met VR — SKY. How foolish she had been. How could she love a man who wouldn't even tell her all the letters in his name? She had been such a fool, but now she knew what she must do. It was as inevitable to her as the bonus round at the end of every show. She beamed a winning smile, clapped her hands together, walked off the letter platform, and stood next to the wheel.

She stood motionless. A feeling such as she had never known came over her. She

crossed herself. Then she clapped her hands together and jumped up and down, squealing with excitement. Her life came flooding back to her. She saw her childhood. She was sitting over a steaming bowl of alphabet soup, lost in reverie. She was standing in front of a full-length mirror at Gramps's house, practicing being perky. She had so many thoughts, so many memories.

Yet she did not take her eyes off the turning wheel. Suddenly she dove, face forward, onto the wheel, impaling herself between "Lose a Turn" and "\$450."

As she felt her life, a life filled with many troubles, many falsehoods, much sorrow, much evil, many of the glitziest gowns this side of dream-date Barbie, slipping away, she lifted her head, looked straight into the camera, smiled, and waved "Bye-bye." □



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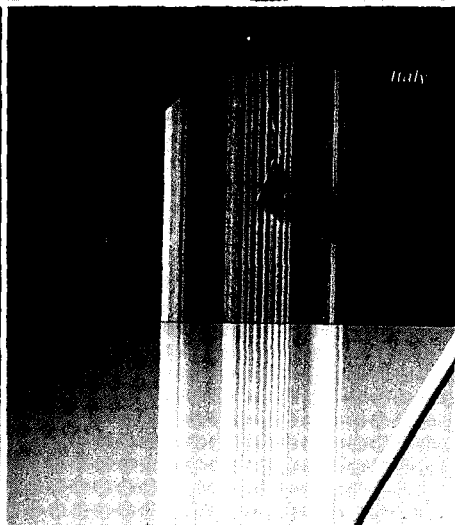
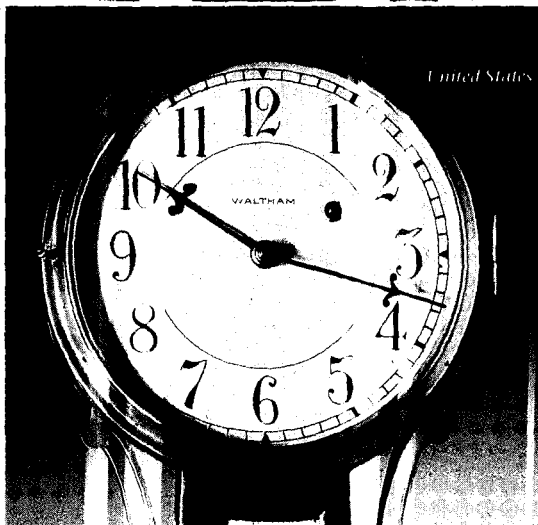
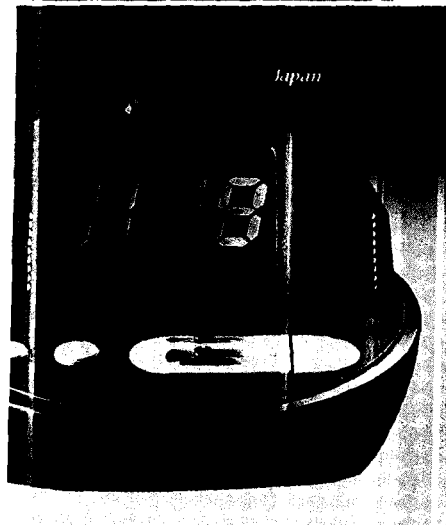
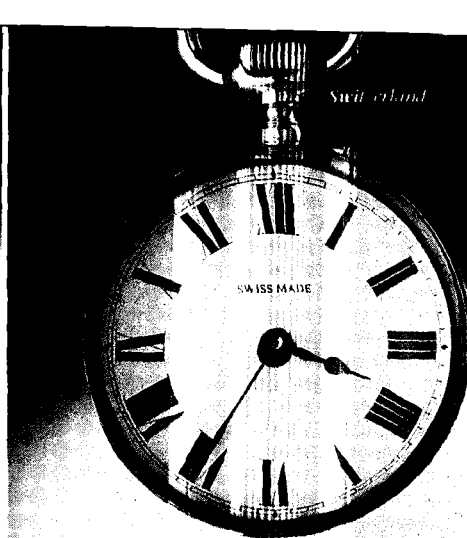
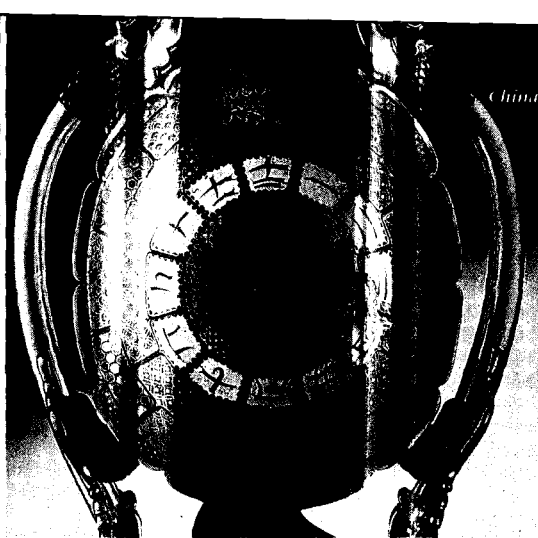
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The speeches of the astrophysicist Fang Lizhi have galvanized students and given political discourse in China a new depth of field, and although he has been expelled from the Chinese Communist Party his influence is undiminished

CHINA'S ANDREI SAKHAROV

BY ORVILLE SCHELL

The Origins of a Dissident

WHEN I RETURNED TO BEIJING IN THE FALL OF 1986, after an absence of six months, it was hard not to feel disoriented by the sudden change in political climate. During the previous spring and summer, political and intellectual life had begun to thaw to an extent unprecedented since the Chinese Communist Party had come to power, in 1949. Following on the heels of a bold program of economic reform and of opening up to the outside world, which China's paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, had launched in 1978, this relaxation of Party control over economic, intellectual, and political life had filled the Chinese with a heady new sense of possibility. The increasing tolerance of individualism and freedom of expression reflected the surprising but growing conviction among China's new generation of reform-minded leaders that their country would never be successful in its efforts to modernize unless some dramatic way could be found to re-energize its people and win their willing participation in a new drive toward economic development. Political reform and democratization became their new rallying cries. But to the older, hard-line Maoists, who had spent their lives fighting for a very different kind of revolution—one that stressed centralization and Party discipline, rather than individual initiative and democracy—this latest wave of reform appeared as at best an unwelcome disruption and at worst a dangerous form of apostasy. While young reformers watched enthusiastically as official publications began to bloom with articles advocating freedom of speech and the press, the separation of governmental powers, and the protection of human rights, and as intellectuals publicly called for the democratization of almost all aspects of Chinese life, revolutionary hard-liners looked on with displeasure, waiting for an auspicious moment to counterattack.

A deep wariness of speaking too freely had been burned

into many senior intellectuals by the crackdowns that had, with a horrifying inevitability, terminated all previous interludes of liberalism in Chinese Communist history. While it was true that fall that the boundaries of acceptable political discourse were broader than ever, most intellectuals nonetheless prudently continued to try to stay within the elusive margins of Party tolerance. But there were a few who, seemingly without regard for their future, dared speak out openly. The most vocal of these was a fifty-two-year-old astrophysicist of international stature named Fang Lizhi, who by last year had become legendary throughout China for his forceful calls for democracy and his forthrightness in publicly saying what he believed.



When I first met Fang, in his Beijing apartment last fall, what impressed me about him was his good cheer and guilelessness. He laughed easily—an infectious laugh that spiraled spontaneously into something like a whinny, carrying everything with it in a burst of unpremeditated mirthfulness. He was dressed simply, in a knit shirt, a tweed coat, and permanent-press slacks. Tortoise-shell glasses gave him a slightly owlish look. He made an initial impression of ordinariness—until, that is, he began to talk. Then I instantly sensed that I was in the presence of a man of not only keen intelligence and conviction but fearlessness. The longer I was with him, the more the quality struck me. Far from being a studied posture adopted as a means of resisting intimidation, Fang's fearlessness appeared deeply rooted in his personality, which in spite of its manifest self-confidence betrayed no suggestion of arrogance. Seldom have I met a man who, although at the center of an intense and dangerous national controversy—the Communist Party had laid the blame for the student demonstrations of the previous winter on his frequent speeches to student groups, in which he openly advocated Western de-

mocracy—so lacked the kind of polemical energy that often makes zealots of a lesser kind shrill and self-justifying. Although Fang obviously cared deeply about the cause of democracy in China, he was not one to thrust it upon anyone; and although he had been politically persecuted throughout his life, there was no hint of rancor or resentment in his politics. What he was for was so much ascendant over what he was against that the notion of enemies seemed utterly alien to his intellectual, political, and emotional vocabulary.

What made being with him strangely uncharacteristic of my experiences in China was his complete lack of the self-censorship that renders many other Chinese intellectuals of his generation incapable of speaking their minds. Never overriding his thoughts and feelings with the usual subtle (and frequently unconscious) genuflections to the official political line of the moment, Fang spoke so openly about what he was thinking and what he believed that one had to suppress the urge to warn him of the dangers of such candor.

Such warnings have in fact come from many quarters, but Fang is impervious to them. “Everything I have ever said is open,” Fang told me. “I have nothing to hide. And since I have already said everything that I believe many times in public, what is the point of trying to hide things now, in private?”

TO RECOUNT THOSE MANY TIMES IS TO TELL THE story of his life, which began in Beijing in 1936, when he was born into the family of a postal clerk from the city of Hangzhou. He entered Beijing University (Beida) in 1952, as a student of theoretical and nuclear physics, and although he quickly distinguished himself as an unusually capable scientist, politics was as important to him as his studies. His first recorded brush with political dissent occurred one February day in 1955, during the founding meeting of the university chapter of the Communist Youth League (an organization that arranges political and recreational activities for young people and that anyone who intends to become a Party member must join). The league branch secretary from the physics department had been addressing the gathering, in the auditorium of Beida’s administration building, and had just begun discussing the role of the league in stimulating idealism among China’s youth when Fang Lizhi, then a nineteen-year-old student, dashed up onto the stage, indicating his desire to speak.

“Some of us students in the physics department thought the meeting was too dull, just a lot of formalistic speeches,” Fang has said. “So we decided to liven things up a bit. When it came time for our branch secretary to speak, he let me express my opinion, since I had the loudest voice.” Taking over the stage from the secretary, Fang redirected the discussion to the general subject of the Chinese educational system. “I said that this kind of meeting was completely meaningless. I asked what kind of people we were

turning out when what we should have been doing was training people to think independently. Just having the Three Goods [good health, good study practices, and good work] is such a depressing concept and hardly enough to motivate anyone.

“After I spoke, the meeting fell into complete disorder. The next day the Party committee secretary, who was the top person in charge of ideological work for students at Beijing University, spoke all day. He said that although independent thinking was, of course, all well and good, students should settle down and study.”

In spite of his attraction to politics, Fang did in fact settle down to study, earning straight As at Beida. There he met his future wife, Li Shuxian, who was a fellow student in the physics department, which she ultimately joined as a faculty member. In 1956, at the age of twenty, Fang graduated from Beida and was assigned to work at the Chinese Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Modern Physics Research. But a year later the Anti-Rightist Campaign began, and Chinese intellectuals who had spoken up during the previous Hundred Flowers Movement were ruthlessly persecuted. Because he had written a lengthy memorial on the need to reform China’s educational system so that politics would not stifle scientific research, Fang was severely criticized. Unlike many other intellectuals under pressure, he refused to recant his alleged misdeeds and was expelled from the Party in 1957.

“For a long time after the Anti-Rightist Campaign, I continued to believe in communism,” Fang told me. “Even after I was expelled from the Party, I continued to have faith in Chairman Mao and believed that it must have been I who was wrong.”

Wrong or not, as a promising young scientist he was greatly needed by China in its early efforts to industrialize and was allowed to keep his position at the Institute of Modern Physics Research. He was ultimately even sent to help organize a new department of physics at the University of Science and Technology (Kexue Jishu Daxue, or Keda for short), which was just then being set up in Beijing. During the next few years, while teaching classes in quantum mechanics and electromagnetics, Fang also conducted research on solid-state and laser physics. Despite his previous political troubles, and because of his obvious talent in his field, in 1963 he was promoted to the position of lecturer.

But no sooner had Fang’s life and career begun to resume a more normal course than the Cultural Revolution broke out, in 1966, and like so many other Chinese intellectuals, Fang once more ran afoul of politics. This time he was “struggled against” as a “reactionary” and incarcerated in a *niupeng*, or “cow shed”—a form of solitary confinement often chosen by the Red Guards for intellectuals of the “stinking ninth category” (Maoists had divided Chinese society into nine categories). After a year’s imprisonment he was released and “sent down” to the countryside in Anhui province to work with the peasantry. Here, because of the paucity of scientific books available to him, he

was forced to change the focus of his scholarly work and to concentrate on the study of relativity and theoretical astrophysics.

"I had only one book with me—the Soviet physicist Lev Landau's *Classical Theory of Fields*," Fang told me. "For six months I did nothing but read this book over and over again. It was this curious happenstance alone that caused me to switch fields from solid-state physics to cosmology.

"It was then that I began to feel that perhaps Mao was not so good for the country. But because at the time most of us intellectuals still believed in communism, we were left with a difficult question: If not Mao, whom should we follow? There was, of course, no one else, and he was the embodiment of all idealism.

"After the Cultural Revolution started, everything became much clearer. I realized that the Party had not been telling the truth, that they had in fact been deceiving people, and that I should not believe them anymore. You see, a sense of duty, responsibility, and loyalty to the country had been inculcated within me as a youth, but what I saw around me made me feel that the leaders weren't similarly concerned about the country and weren't shouldering responsibility for its people."

In 1969, when the Academy of Sciences began to move several of the undergraduate departments of Keda from Beijing to the provincial capital of Hefei, in Anhui, Fang, along with several dozen other academics who had been stigmatized with rightist labels, was exiled with them. In Hefei, Fang began to study and teach astrophysics, but because of the political cloud hanging over him, he was able to publish the results of his research only under a pseudonym.

His full rehabilitation did not come about until 1978, two years after the fall of the Gang of Four. At this time he regained his Party membership and received tenure at Keda, shortly thereafter becoming China's youngest full professor. The next few years were perhaps his most creative, from a scientific point of view. Fang, who was increasingly interested in the cosmology of the early universe, began to publish frequently on this subject, now under his own name. (By 1986 he had more than 130 articles to his credit.) In 1980 his popularity at Keda led to his being elected director of the fundamental-physics department, with more than 90 percent of the faculty's 120 votes. However, his politically progressive views and outspokenness continued to cause the Party to distrust him. Because of secret reports from a fellow professor impugning his political reliability, Fang, though nominated several times for the post of vice-president of the University of Science and Technology, was rejected.

What was ultimately to have the profoundest impact on Fang was his readings in politics and his travels abroad, which became possible as a result of Deng Xiaoping's open-door policy. In 1978 Fang left China for the first time, to attend a conference on relativistic astrophysics in Munich. Subsequent trips took him to the Vatican, for a cosmology conference; to Bogotá, Colombia, for another

conference; to Italy, as a visiting professor at the University of Rome; to England, as a senior visiting fellow at the Institute of Astronomy at Cambridge University; to Japan, as a visiting professor at Kyoto University's Research Institute for Fundamental Physics; and finally to the United States, where he was in residence at the Institute for Advanced Study, in Princeton, from March through July of 1986. These trips abroad were to influence deeply the way that Fang looked at the Chinese socialist system and the role of intellectuals within it.

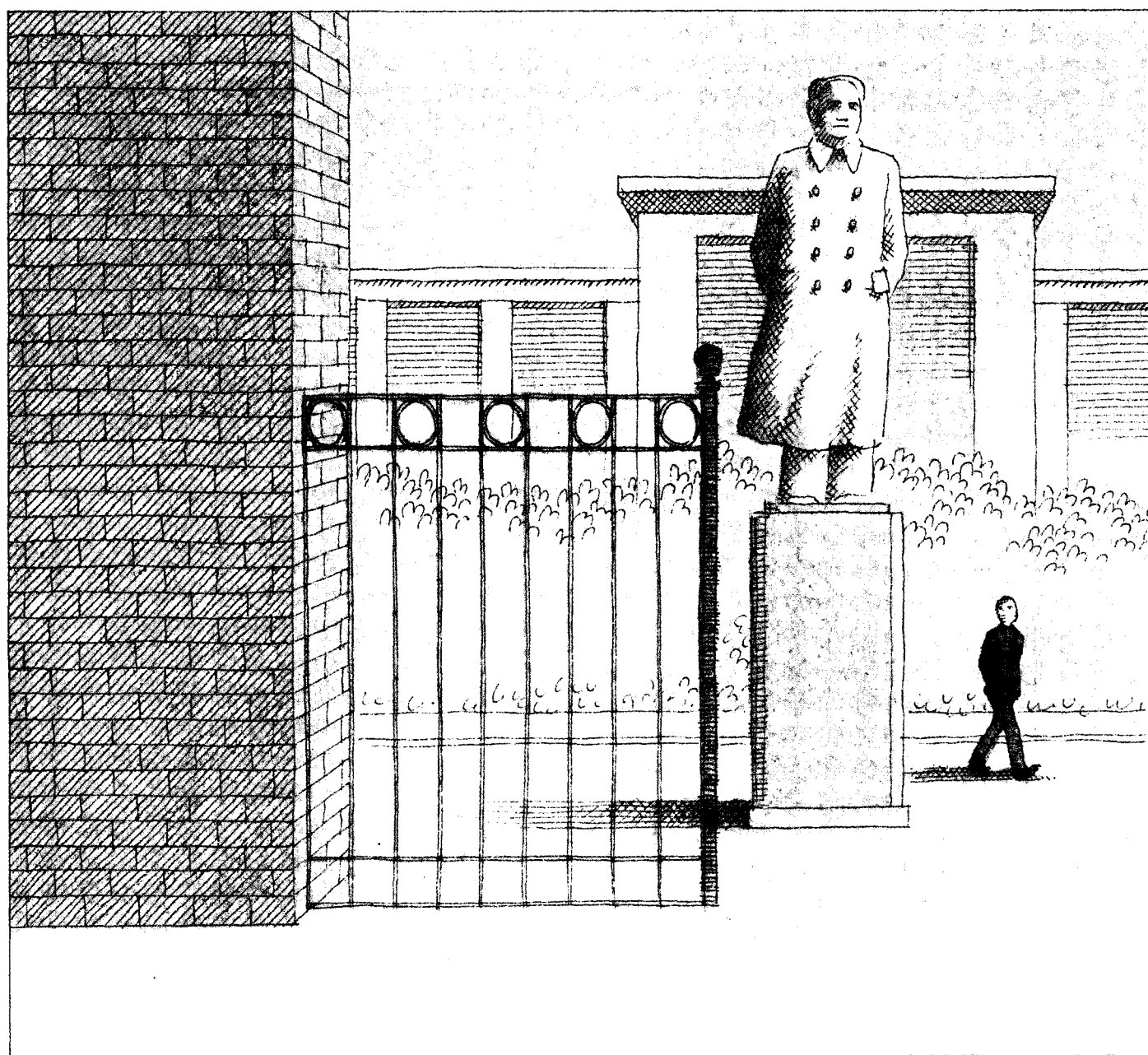
In spite of many years of political harassment and periodic near-total isolation from the world scientific community, Fang had now become one of the very few scientists from the People's Republic ever to have received such international scientific attention and acclaim. Fang was even more unusual for his interest in education, philosophy, and politics, as well as science—interests that grew out of his conviction that in any truly creative mind science and philosophy, of which he took politics to be an extension, were indissolubly bound together.

Just as scientific research was a way of bearing witness to truths about the natural world, so, Fang believed, intellectual and political inquiry were ways of bearing witness to truths about the political and social world.

Interviewed by the writer Dai Qing in the newspaper *Guangming Daily* in December of 1986, Fang explained his notion of the special role that he hoped scientists, as intellectuals, would play in the development of a modern China. He noted, prophetically in his own case, that "almost invariably, it has been the natural scientists who have been the first to become conscious of the emergence of each social crisis." Then, evidently paraphrasing Einstein, he declared, "Scientists must express their feelings about all aspects of society, especially when unreasonable, wrong, or evil things emerge. If they do otherwise, they will be considered accomplices."

Fang's remedy for the claustrophobic intellectual climate of most Chinese educational institutions was to scrutinize their shortcomings both honestly and relentlessly. "The emergence and development of new theories necessitates creating an atmosphere of democracy and freedom in the university," he told Dai Qing. "In the university, there should be nothing that . . . allows no questioning of why it must be upheld. There should be no doctrine allowed to hold a leading or guiding position in an a priori way."

As he tried to play his part as a "conscience of civilization," one of the most shocking things that Fang began to say publicly was that socialism as an ideology was passé for China. "When I first said this, back in 1980, Fang Yi, the Vice-Premier in charge of science and technology, called me in and criticized me," Fang Lizhi told me with an impish smile one day. "He said, 'How could you say a thing like that?' And I replied, 'I said it because I believe it.' He said, 'Well, I might go even so far as to say that I agree with you, but one can't just come right out and say such a thing!'"



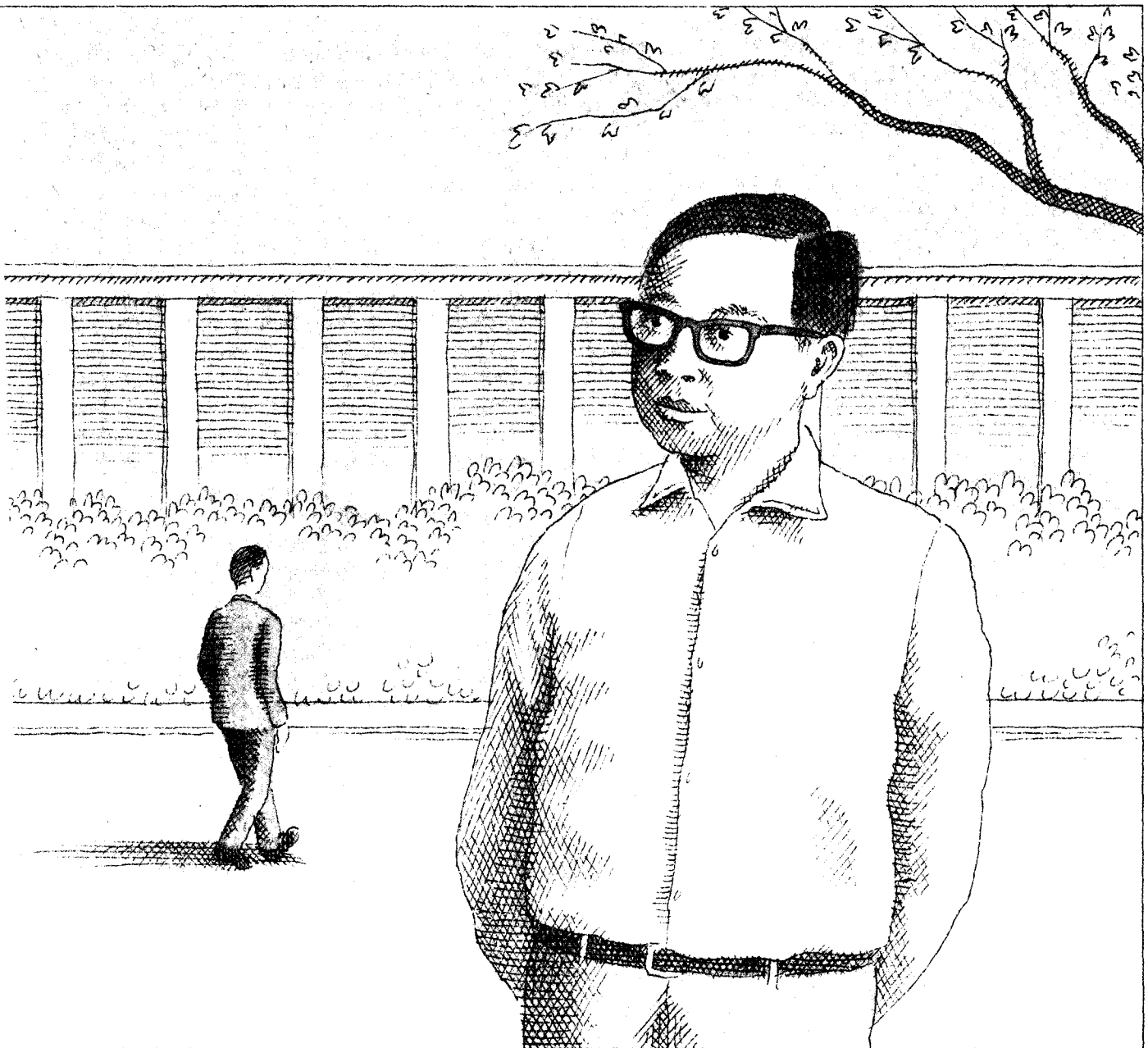
Fang Emerges as a Leader

IN 1984 FANG LIZHI WAS FINALLY PROMOTED TO THE position of vice-president of the University of Science and Technology, and Guan Weiyan, a colleague in physics, was appointed president. Clearly, Fang's star was now rising. There were soon efforts among the liberal reform faction in China's central leadership to nominate Fang for high provincial office, and even to confer upon him membership in the Party's Central Committee—all this despite his refusal to maintain Party discipline and promote its mythology.

The next year the Ministry of Education issued a report, "The Reform of China's Educational Structure," calling for dramatic changes in the country's university system. It recommended that administrators be elected to top

positions by committees of academics, rather than being appointed by the Party. Fang and Guan designed and proposed a radical plan to redistribute power horizontally at Keda. Instead of keeping all authority concentrated in the hands of top-level administrators, allowing them to control research funding, the awarding of degrees, and faculty promotions, these functions would be spread out among special committees and the departments themselves.

A second reform proposed in the plan involved establishing the right of faculty and staff members to audit all administrative meetings. Fang held that since the socialist system claimed to have made the people the masters of their own country, the people should have the right to know what their leaders were up to. This was an especially important concept for Fang, because he believed that a major defect of Chinese society was that in the absence of



oversight provisions, problems and grievances piled up unresolved until any given situation became explosive.

A third area of reform that concerned Fang and Guan was free speech. They wished to establish firmly the right of students and faculty members not only to speak out on campus but also to remain free from subtler but not necessarily less crippling forms of ideological repression. Fang and Guan wished to create an open academic and political environment at Keda, and since in their view diversity was something to be cultivated, not suppressed, it was their conviction that anyone should be able to put up a handbill and hold an event on campus without having to seek prior approval from some higher authority.

This was indeed a bold vision of academic freedom, such as the People's Republic of China had never known. But Fang and Guan did not stop there. To foster openness

with a cosmopolitan dimension, they also sought to establish as much contact as possible with the outside world. By the end of 1986 more than 900 faculty members and students from Keda had been sent abroad to visit, lecture, and study, and more than 200 foreign scholars had visited Keda. Exchange programs had been set up with educational institutions in the United States, Japan, Britain, Italy, and France.

Fang's experience with this reform process convinced him that the most meaningful task he could undertake in China was not scientific research but pressing for change in the country's educational system. "I am determined to create intellectual and academic freedom—this will be my top priority," he said, with his usual directness, when asked about his future plans. In the context of a Western democracy, where traditions like intellectual and academic

freedom are taken for granted, such a declaration might sound commonplace, but coming from a university vice-president in China just as it emerged from the Cultural Revolution, his words had the effect of throwing down a gauntlet to Party hard-liners.

Moreover, while Fang was helping to fashion these educational reforms at Keda, he was by no means shutting himself off from the broader political issues and currents of the country at large. In fact, in 1985 and 1986 Fang seemed to turn up whenever and wherever there was open political discussion or ferment, a habit that must have caused consternation among those hard-liners in the Party hierarchy whose conception of the "mass line" had never included radical educational reform, much less a spontaneous political campaign for the democratization of Chinese life, led by roaming freethinkers like Fang.

On November 4, 1985, in a stirring, free-ranging, and sometimes even humorous talk that held his Beida audience spellbound, Fang encouraged the students to hold on to their social concern and political activism and to look to the West for new models of intellectual commitment if none could be found in China. Addressing himself to the larger issues of China's backwardness and his hopes for its future, Fang declared,

... There is a social malaise in our country today, and the primary reason for it is the poor example set by Party members. Unethical behavior by Party leaders is especially to blame. This is a situation that clearly calls for action on the part of intellectuals. . . .

... We are obligated to work for the improvement of society. . . . This requires that we break the bonds of social restraint when necessary. Creativity has not been encouraged over the past three decades as being in keeping with Chinese tradition. It is a shame that, as a result, China has yet to produce work worthy of consideration for a Nobel Prize. Why is this? . . .

One reason for this situation is our social environment. Many of us who have been to foreign countries to study or work agree that we can perform much more efficiently and productively abroad than in China. . . . Foreigners are no more intelligent than we Chinese. Why, then, can't we produce first-rate work? The reasons for our inability to develop our potential lie within our social system. . . . [This translation and several that follow are those of the *China Spring Digest*.]

Placing the blame for China's backwardness on the closed nature of its society, Fang continued,

... Some of us dare not speak out. But if we all spoke out, there would be nothing to be afraid of. This is surely one important cause of our lack of idealism and discipline.

Another cause is that over the years our propaganda about communism has been seriously flawed. . . . Room must be made for the great variety of excellence that has found expression in human civilization. Our narrow propaganda seems to imply that. . . . nothing that came before us has any merit whatsoever. This is the most worth-

less and destructive form of propaganda. Propaganda can be used to praise Communist heroes, but it should not be used to tear down other heroes. . . .

We Communist Party members should be open to different ways of thinking. We should be open to different cultures and willing to adopt the elements of those cultures that are clearly superior. A great diversity of thought should be allowed in colleges and universities. For if all thought is narrow and simplistic, creativity will die. At present there are certainly some people in power who still insist on dictating to others according to their own narrow principles. . . .

We must not be afraid to speak openly about these things. In fact, it is our duty. If we remain silent, we will fail to live up to our responsibility.

THE BEIDA STUDENTS HAD NEVER HEARD A RESPECTED faculty member speak publicly like this before, and Fang's effect was electrifying. Moreover, it was only one of many talks that Fang would give over the next year, as he traveled to other cities, quickly earning himself the reputation of being China's foremost freethinker. Fang Lizhi is a singular figure in post-Mao China. The content of his speeches made it difficult to remember that he was still a member of the Chinese Communist Party, where, as ever, the watchwords were *discipline* and *obedience*.

Meanwhile, so successful were Fang and Guan's reforms at Keda that the official Party newspaper, the *People's Daily*, caught up in China's new dalliance with democratic thinking, ran a series of five articles, in October and November of 1986, describing them in the most adulatory way, a move tantamount to giving them the Party's seal of approval. In fact, the writer, Lu Fang, was so impressed by what he had seen at Keda that from the very first sentence of the first article he seemed unable to control his enthusiasm. Instead of reciting a litany of facts and statistics to introduce his subject, as this genre of news feature often calls for, he dove right in and began, "During my trip to Keda, everywhere I breathed the air of democracy." Lu went on to praise the openness and "unconstrained atmosphere" of the university in which students and faculty members worked together.

Still mindful during those halcyon days of democratic dialogue that even the warmest political climate in China can suddenly frost over, the *People's Daily* published another article that fall asking rhetorically if it were not a concern that the radical experiments in educational reform at Keda might someday be branded as "wholesale Westernization," a derogatory term used by Party hard-liners to describe any overtly Western phenomenon. "Perhaps someone will bring up the question," the article went on to answer itself. "In applying a system of 'separate and balanced powers' to run a college, is there not always some danger of being suspected of imitating Western capitalism? But the methods used at Keda are actually in accordance with the directions of Party Central regarding the 'practical application of democratization to every aspect of social life.' They are in accordance with the Constitution, which

prescribes academic freedom. It [democracy] is not something that is being 'sneaked in the back door' here. We should have no suspicion about that."

The effect of these articles in the *People's Daily* was both to transform Keda into an official new post-Mao model university and to elevate Guan and Fang to the status of semi-official national heroes. The glare of the spotlight, far from cowering Fang into silence as it might some intellectuals, seemed hardly to faze him. In November, Shanghai's *World Economic Herald* ran an article that quoted Fang as declaring that China's intellectuals "lack their own independent mentality and a standard of value, always yield to power, and link their futures to an official career. . . . And once they become officials themselves, many intellectuals change their attitude from being absolutely obedient to higher levels to being absolutely conceited. They suppress and attack other intellectuals."

Fang went on to call on intellectuals to remake themselves and, instead of being slavishly obedient to those above them, to "straighten out their bent backs." And then, as if he had despaired of the older generation, he ended with an appeal to Chinese to "place their hopes in those younger intellectuals who are growing up during the nineteen eighties."

It was one thing to crusade for educational reforms, even to discuss democracy, human rights, or checks and balances in the abstract, but here was Fang Lizhi implicitly appealing to youthful intellectuals (and also his academic peers) to form a powerful new check against Party power. This was a bold challenge indeed, for Fang seemed to be implying that the Party's failure to reform itself from within now justified pressure from without.

Students Take Fang's Mandate as Their Own

IT WAS OBVIOUS TO ANYONE WATCHING THAT STUDENTS were powerfully drawn to Fang, not only by his intelligence, candor, and irreverence but also by his willingness to name names. Never had a leader spoken to them so unguardedly about Party pomposity, favoritism, prejudice, even corruption. The Party might have tolerated his tweaking its tail over such apparent hypocrisies as a Constitution that guaranteed rights it was not prepared to defend, but it could hardly countenance his outright attack on high-ranking officials.

In 1985, for instance, Fang publicly denounced the vice-mayor of Beijing, Zhang Baifa, for contriving to join a scientific delegation that had been invited to attend a confer-

ence on synchrotron radiation in New York state. Fang had learned of the case because China's lone synchrotron was jointly operated by his own university and the Institute of High Energy Physics, in Beijing. Fang's refusal to overlook this kind of junketing and feather-bedding by the Party elite, and his willingness to bring such cases to the attention of student activists, made him an even greater favorite of young intellectuals disgusted with such behavior.

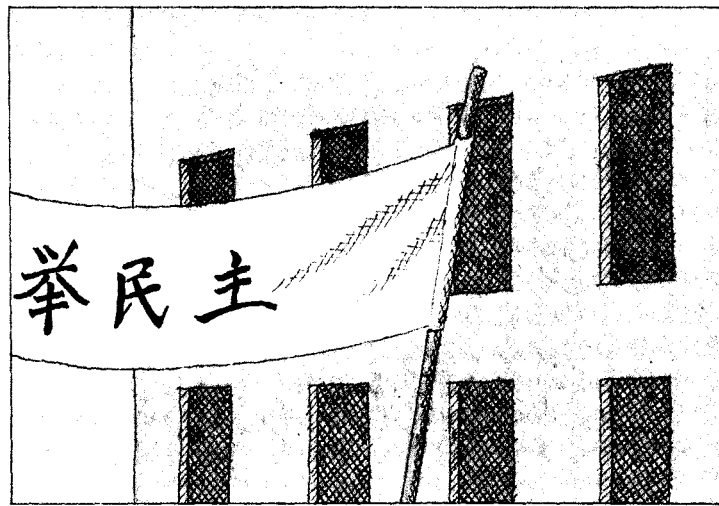
When criticized by ranking Party leaders for his *lèse majesté*, Fang replied, "As for Zhang Baifa appropriating the conference seats that should have gone to the University, I just want to ask him what he knows about synchrotrons. Is he willing to take a test?" As a result of his attack on the vice-mayor, Fang's trip to the Institute of Advanced Study,

planned for January, 1986, was suddenly canceled. It was not until two months later that Fang, still refusing to recant, was finally allowed to leave the country.

Upon returning to China from the United States late that fall, just as appeals for political reform reached a crescendo, Fang traveled to several Chinese cities, making speeches, holding discussion groups, and giving interviews. His calls for

democracy were bolder and more uncompromising than ever, and his fearlessness more pronounced. During November, particularly in student circles, Fang Lizhi's name was spoken more and more often. In Beijing, Hefei, Hangzhou, Ningbo, Shanghai—wherever he spoke—young people listened, recorded, and even transcribed his talks by hand, and sent them on to friends and student groups all across China, and even to colleagues studying in the United States and Europe. Chinese students, who had almost completely lost the kind of socialist idealism that had so distinguished their parents' generation during earlier phases of the Chinese Communist Revolution, now seemed perched on the precipice of a whole new system of beliefs. In the ideological vacuum of the 1980s they thirsted for someone and something to believe in. Just as these young Chinese had come to worship the West for its appliances, style, culture, and technology, now they were becoming entranced with its political ideas and "isms." Nowhere was the threadbare nature of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought more evident than in the way many of these young Chinese intellectuals found themselves drawn to the gospel of democracy as preached by Fang Lizhi.

When the Party repeatedly urged Fang to tone down his message, he refused, and even fired a salvo or two at Deng's sacred Four Cardinal Principles, which upheld so-



cialism, the people's democratic dictatorship, the leadership of the Communist Party, and Marxism–Leninism–Mao Zedong thought. When asked what he thought of them, he replied that although he realized they were “articles of faith among the political leadership,” he preferred four different principles—namely, “science, democracy, creativity, and independence.” He went on to observe that if his principles conflicted with those of the Party, it was only because the latter “advocated superstition instead of science, dictatorship instead of democracy, conservatism instead of creativity, and dependency rather than independence.”

In November, Fang Lizhi gave several speeches in Shanghai. Appearing on the campus of Tongji University on November 18, he addressed a crowd of students on the subject of democracy, reform, and modernization, rousing them to repeated rounds of applause. “We now have a strong sense of urgency about achieving modernization in China,” he told the students.

... Chinese intellectual life, material civilization, moral fiber, and government are in dire straits. ... The truth is that every aspect of the Chinese world needs to be modernized. ... As for myself, I think that all-around openness is the only way to modernize. [It is interesting to note that Fang claims to have consistently used the term *quanfangwei kaifang* (“all-around openness”) rather than *quanpan xifanghua* (“wholesale Westernization”).] I believe in such a thorough and comprehensive liberalization because Chinese culture is not just backward in a particular respect but primitive in an overall sense. ... We are still far behind the rest of the world. And, frankly, I feel we lag behind because the decades of socialist experimentation since Liberation have been—well, a failure! [Long applause.] This is not just my opinion, it is clear for all to see. Socialism is at a low ebb. There is no getting around the fact that no socialist state in the post-Second World War era has been successful, nor has our own thirty-odd-year-long socialist experiment. ... I am here to tell you that the socialist movement from Marx and Lenin to Stalin and Mao Zedong has been a failure. ... Clearing our minds of all Marxist dogma is the first step. ...

After this uncompromising attack on China's socialist patron saints, Fang went on to proclaim:

... We must remold our society by absorbing influences from all cultures. What we must not do is isolate ourselves and allow our conceit to convince us that we alone are correct. ...

For Fang, the most “critical component” of democracy was human rights.

... Human rights are fundamental privileges that people have from birth, such as the right to think and be educated, the right to marry, and so on. But we Chinese consider these rights dangerous. Although human rights are universal and concrete, we Chinese lump freedom, equality, and brotherhood together with capitalism and criticize them all in the same terms. If we are the demo-

cratic country we say we are, these rights should be stronger here than elsewhere, but at present they are nothing more than an abstract idea. [Enthusiastic applause.]

I feel that the first step toward democratization should be the recognition of human rights. ... But [in China] democratization has come to mean something performed by superiors on inferiors—a serious misunderstanding of democracy. [Loud applause.] Our government does not give us democracy simply by loosening our bonds a bit. This gives us only enough freedom to writhe a little. [Enthusiastic applause.] Freedom by decree is not fit to be called democracy, because ... it fails to provide the most basic human rights. ...

In a democratic nation democracy flows from the individual, and the government has responsibilities toward him. ... We must make our government realize that it is economically dependent on its citizens, because such is the basis of democracy. But feudal traditions are still strong in China; social relations are initiated by superiors and accepted by inferiors. ...

People of other societies believe that criminal accusations arising from casual suspicion harm human dignity and privacy. In China, on the other hand, it is not only normal for me to inform on you ... but considered a positive virtue. I would be praised for my alertness and contribution to class struggle in spite of my disrespect for democracy and human rights. ...

Having reiterated his belief that democracy made the people rather than the government sovereign, he went on to redefine the position of a university in Chinese society.

... To liberate oneself from the slavery of governmental and other nonintellectual authorities, one need only view knowledge as an independent organism. But this is not so in China. Our universities produce tools, not educated men. [Applause.] Our graduates cannot think for themselves. They are quite happy to be the docile instruments of someone else's purposes. China's intelligentsia has still not cleansed itself of this tendency. ... Knowledge should be independent of power. It must never submit, for knowledge loses its value as soon as it bows to power. ...

About Party pressure against his outspokenness, Fang said,

I have heard grumbling about my political ideas, and that is fine. But I simply will not accept any interference in my scientific research. ... Democracy will have no protection until the entire scientific community is filled with this spirit. The products of scientific knowledge should be appraised by scientific standards. We should not be swayed by the winds of power. Only then can we modernize, and only then will we have real democracy.

Fang's speeches, putting into words what many of his colleagues thought but dared not utter in public, were like detonations beneath the whole edifice of Party thought control. Here at last, after thirty-five years during which almost all alternative or oppositional thoughts had been suppressed, was a man who when he spoke made no effort to censor the forbidden or divide his thoughts between the



Joe Williams



Susan Saint James



Dave Brubeck



Leonard Bernstein



Yo-Yo Ma

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private and the public. Because Fang and a small number of other dissidents, including Liu Binyan and Wang Ruowang, writers who in spite of almost constant Party persecution had continued to write exposés and critiques of Party malfeasance and stupidity, continued to speak and to suggest alternative ways of looking at the Party, China, and the world, political discourse in China had acquired a new depth of field, a three-dimensionality in which Party orthodoxy at least momentarily lost its monopoly.

Early that winter, just as Fang and many other Chinese intellectuals began evincing some sense of hope that China might succeed after all in evolving politically toward greater democratization, a series of events that no one had anticipated took place. Beginning in Hefei, at Fang's own university, on December 5, and ending in Beijing on January 1, twenty large Chinese cities were suddenly racked by demonstrations in which students demanded a speed-up in political reform. Tens of thousands of protesters flooded the streets of urban China carrying placards and banners emblazoned with such slogans as NO DEMOCRATIZATION, NO MODERNIZATION and GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, AND FOR THE PEOPLE. Campuses were festooned with wall posters proclaiming anti-Party sentiments like I HAVE A DREAM, A DREAM OF FREEDOM. I HAVE A DREAM OF DEMOCRACY. I HAVE A DREAM OF LIFE ENDOWED WITH HUMAN RIGHTS. MAY THE DAY COME WHEN ALL THESE ARE MORE THAN DREAMS.

Alarmed by the specter of political chaos, the Party reflexively acted to quell the disturbances and to locate and root out their causes. Urged on by Maoist hard-liners, for whom the student uprising had been the embodiment of their worst fears about reform, the Party launched a swift counterattack.

The Party Reacts to Fang and the Protests

IN EARLY JANUARY OF LAST YEAR, JUST AFTER THE STUDENT demonstrations had ended, the *Anhui Daily* (published in Hefei, the home of Keda) ran an article that, like advance artillery fire softening up an enemy target, seemed to be preparing its readers for a larger political campaign to follow. Taking a surprisingly soft line on the recent demonstrations, the article said that student "enthusiasm and concern about the fate of our nation and the future of reforms is understandable." The real blame for the recent upheavals, it suggested, lay elsewhere—namely, in the hands of that "very small number of people who had spurred on the trend of 'bourgeois liberalization,' propagated opinions against the Four Cardinal Principles, and taken advantage of the students' enthusiasm and lack of experience in society to achieve their political aims."

The *Guangming Daily*, which just the previous year had jubilantly proclaimed, "Our socialist system not only does not fear people speaking out but encourages them to do so," now lashed out menacingly against overly Westernized notions of democracy. On January 11 it ran a commen-

tary with the headline "THE ESSENCE OF POLITICAL 'WHOLESALE WESTERNIZATION' MEANS DISCARDING SOCIALISM," which suggested that the students had been manipulated into demonstrating by a certain unnamed "Vice-President comrade of a university."

On January 12 Zhou Guangzhao, a member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the vice-president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, summoned the Keda faculty to a special meeting. In the very center of the front row of the large meeting hall were two conspicuously empty seats. When the room fell silent, Zhou Guangzhao announced that the Party Central Committee and the State Council had decided to remove Guan Weiyan, the president of the university, and Fang Lizhi, the vice-president, from office and to reassign them, respectively, to the Institute of Physics and the Beijing Observatory, both in the capital.

After announcing this coup, Zhou Guangzhao accused Fang of having "disseminated many erroneous statements reflecting 'bourgeois liberalization'" and of having departed from the Four Cardinal Principles. He continued his attack by saying that Fang's "ideas of running the school by attempting to shake off the Party leadership and departing from the socialist road had resulted in extremely nasty consequences for Keda. These erroneous ideas were fully revealed in the recent disturbance created by students of this university."

The assessment made by the secretary of the Anhui Provincial Party Committee, Li Guixian, was even more extreme. He claimed that Fang had "defamed the Party's cadres and leadership, and negated the cause of the Party over the past few decades, slandered and distorted the socialist system, and sown discord in the relations between the Party and intellectuals, especially among young intellectuals." Then, in that Maoist way so recognizable to all Chinese, Li began to speak directly to Fang's former colleagues in the audience, seeming to offer understanding while actually delivering a threat. "It should be noted that most cadres and teachers at Keda disapprove of, and many comrades resolutely reject, Fang Lizhi's erroneous words and deeds. Some comrades may have made some erroneous remarks under Fang Lizhi's influence, but it is a good thing that today they have realized their mistakes and corrected themselves. Those few comrades who up to now have failed to do so are allowed to take some time to realize their mistakes, but they must observe discipline."

Over the next few days articles in the official press railed against Fang. These attacks were so relentless, repetitive, and overblown that it sometimes seemed as if the Party despaired of convincing even its own members, not to mention other intellectuals, of the righteousness of its actions, except by the sheer force and volume of its rhetoric. Any lingering uncertainties about whether the orders for Fang's ouster had come from the very top of the Party were dispelled when, a day after Fang's dismissal, Deng Xiaoping himself denounced Fang Lizhi, along with Liu Binyan and Wang Ruowang, by name during a meeting with Noboru

Takeshita, then the Secretary General of the Japanese Liberal-Democratic Party and now Japan's Premier.

Fang's ouster set off an immediate reaction at Keda. Students organized a petition drive to protest his dismissal and put up banners saying, IT IS CHINA'S SHAME THAT IT CANNOT EMBRACE SUCH A SCHOLAR AS FANG LIZHI, and MR. GUAN AND MR. FANG, YOU HAVE ALREADY MADE YOUR SACRIFICES. WE MISS YOU AND HOPE WE WILL SEE YOU AGAIN. Authorities quashed the petition drive and tore down the banners.

On January 16, four days after Fang's dismissal, the Chinese were stunned to hear that Hu Yaobang, the Party General Secretary and the man widely considered to be Deng Xiaoping's chosen successor, had been removed from office. But the Party did not stop even here. A week later, on January 19 (as if Fang's dismissal from his position at Keda had not sufficiently rid China's system of him), Xu Leyi, a deputy Party secretary in Anhui province, appeared on evening television and completed the new purge. For seven minutes of the half-hour news broadcast he was shown reading a statement from the Anhui Provincial Party Committee announcing that Fang Lizhi had not only lost his job but also been expelled from the Chinese Communist Party. In the communiqué that followed, the Party enumerated the now familiar litany of Fang's "extremely serious" mistakes, each one backed up by a list of offending quotations.

THE FANG LIZHI AFFAIR QUICKLY BECAME A CAUSE célèbre in China. Within days of his dismissal, members of the foreign press and the diplomatic community in Beijing were referring to him as China's Sakharov. Chinese intellectuals, even those who did not completely agree with Fang's uncompromising vision of democracy for their country, applauded him for his unwavering boldness. The Party, desperate to stem this hagiographic treatment of Fang, was relentless in its media campaign against him. Even the *People's Daily*, which only two months earlier had lionized Fang and Guan for having created a model university at Keda, now ridiculed them, claiming that in "waving the banner of running universities in a democratic way" they were "passing fish eyes off as pearls" and letting "vulcanized copper masquerade as gold." This was certainly not the first time that a Chinese publication had been forced to reverse itself—and surely there are few kinds of intellectual debasement worse than the forced repudiation by a writer or an editor of passion-

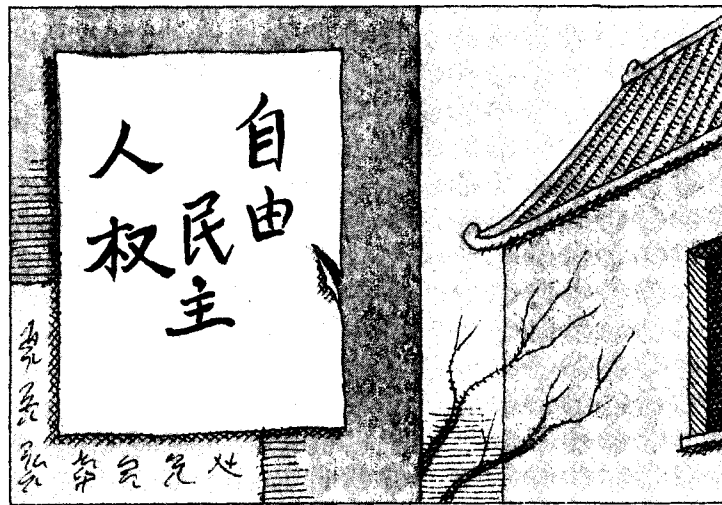
ately held and publicly expressed beliefs—to keep its political position parallel to the careening Party line.

Fang's outspoken espousal of democracy and human rights had put the Party in a difficult bind, and made it appear grossly inconsistent. Having vigorously tried to cultivate intellectuals at various times during the previous years with ever wider calls for ever greater freedom and democracy, it now seemed bent on persecuting them again in a way that could not but remind members of the Chinese intelligentsia of the Anti-Rightist Campaign, which had followed Mao's call for the Hundred Flowers Movement, in the mid-fifties. Sometimes it appeared as if the Party, unable to find the "golden mean" (*zhongyong*)—the middle way revered by classical Chinese political philos-

ophers—hoped at least to create an optical illusion of moderation by oscillating back and forth rapidly between the extremes, alternately coddling and punishing its intellectuals. When, some months later, I asked Fang if he believed that democratization could ever take place in China under the prevailing conditions, he replied, "In China the concept of democratization has often been nothing more than a poker

chip in what is really a game of power. Maybe there are still a few idealistic leaders, but on the whole most are preoccupied with the struggle for power, and they use such concepts as democracy as just another means of defeating their opponents. One side will say, 'I stand for reform and you don't, so you shouldn't be here!' The other will say, 'No! Reform is wrong, so you shouldn't be here!' In the end it is the Chinese people who suffer, because they get used as playthings."

The Party's treatment of Fang pointed up the contradiction embedded within its whole modernization program and within its past as well. If China was to modernize, the Party urgently needed to rally to its cause those students and intellectuals who had been alienated from it for so many years. The key element of this mobilization process included both granting them more freedom and opening China's doors to the outside world. The predicament in which the Party found itself was that along with foreign capital, technology, science, languages, and management techniques came foreign political ideas and values that by their nature challenged the hegemony of one-party rule and led to the kind of hard-line neo-Maoist reaction to which Fang, like so many intellectuals before him in Chinese Communist history, had fallen prey. What was the Party to do? Allow such subversive heresies as democracy, freedom, and human rights to spread unchecked, or crush



the students and intellectuals and risk losing their creative energies for the paramount task of developing China?

Neither alternative seemed acceptable. Desperately needing to find some compromise position, the Party did the only thing it could: it acted inconsistently. By slapping down Fang Lizhi it sent out a signal that while intellectuals were being granted unprecedented new freedoms, public political discourse was not to be among them. However, by limiting its punitive actions to what by historical Party standards were mild ones, it sought at the same time to reassure intellectuals that China was not returning to the political dark ages. In effect, the message was this: "As long as you are willing to leave the supremacy of the Communist Party unchallenged, we will grant you considerable freedom. If you challenge the Party and socialism as its official canon, you will be punished—but not as harshly as before." The reformers in the Party were trying to keep a delicate balance between the imperatives of modernization and those of control. But that January, when it was rocked by renewed factional struggle after the tumultuous student demonstrations of the previous month, it was teetering ominously.

Unintended Propaganda

ABOUT A MONTH AFTER FANG LIZHI WAS DISMISSED from his job, expelled from the Party, and ordered back to the capital to take up the post of researcher at the Beijing Observatory (his wife still taught at Beijing University), I happened to stop by the house of a friend of mine, a longtime Party member who is an up-and-coming official in a state-run enterprise. He, his sister (also a Party member), and I had been eating dried persimmons and watermelon seeds, chatting, and half-heartedly watching a

television program about new strains of purebred swine that were being introduced into Chinese herds, when my friend suddenly disappeared into his bedroom. Moments later he reappeared and, with a conspiratorial smile, handed me a thick sheaf of photocopied papers. To my surprise it consisted of ninety-one pages of speeches and interviews with Fang Lizhi, printed in bold, oversize characters that even the sight-impaired could have read in a dim light, and arranged in chronological order from March, 1985, through December, 1986, complete with a table of contents.

Since the Party was at present ill disposed toward both Fang and all illegal publishing ventures, I expressed amazement at seeing Fang's very controversial speeches printed up in what looked like published form. I asked if my friend had found the collection at some outdoor bookstall, thinking it might have been put out surreptitiously by an underground network of dissidents, as were journals that had circulated in 1978 and 1979, during the Democracy Wall period.

"Not at all—I got these from the Party itself," my friend replied, clearly enjoying my surprise. "The collection is a *neibu* ['internal,' a designation for documents not to be shown outside restricted Party circles] that all of us in the Party are being required to study and criticize."

Smirking, his sister slapped the sheaf of paper and told me that the Party had sent every Party branch copies of Fang's selected works so that all members might hold study meetings to "criticize his erroneous bourgeois liberal line."

"And did you hold such meetings?" I asked.

"You know," my friend's sister replied, her smirk breaking into a full smile, "before the Party handed down this document, no one in our unit really knew much about Fang Lizhi except that he had been vice-president at Keda

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We love it the way the Italians
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as a stronghold of culture,
a stubborn remembrance of revolution,
of green vines tied to stakes,
and the pendulous warm red fruit.

—Mark Irwin

and that he had run into some trouble with the Party over the student demonstrations. Few people had paid much attention to him, and we didn't have much of an idea what he really stood for. However, after the Party compiled these speeches, disseminated them to every Party branch, and then actually required members to read them, we of course got a better sense of him, and an awful lot of people suddenly started saying, 'Hmmm. This guy Fang isn't bad! In fact, he makes a lot of sense!' Before I knew what was happening, many people in my unit became not only quite interested in what Fang had to say but quite sympathetic toward him as well."

"How did the discussion sessions actually work out?"

They both laughed. "Unfortunately, it was my responsibility to organize the study meeting to criticize Fang at my unit," my friend said, rolling his eyes upward. "What could I do? As a result of reading the document, so many people had ended up agreeing with Fang, the very person they were supposed to get together to criticize, that it became next to impossible for us to hold a meeting."

"So, what did you do?"

"It was ridiculous! I finally just said, 'Forget it!,' wrote a report, and sent it on up to my superiors, saying that we had all read the required documents and had learned much from one another's criticisms."

"Did any units you know of actually hold criticism meetings?"

"Probably. But I imagine this kind of charade went on elsewhere in the Party too."

"What's the attitude of your co-workers now toward these kinds of study meetings?" I asked.

"Well, of course, we don't have them as often as we used to," my friend replied with a suggestion of embarrassment. "But when documents do come down from Central, we have to get together to act out the ritual. Usually there's a lot of joking around, because our attitude is that if the leaders want to fight among themselves about ideology, that's their business, but they shouldn't drag the rest of us into these struggles with a lot of propaganda and study meetings. We're tired of it and resent it."

"But aren't people now a little warier than they used to be, because of the recent political crackdown?"

"Even though things loosened up over the past few years, people have become fearful again about stepping too obviously over official boundaries," my friend's sister acknowledged. "Before the student demonstrations people were much more careless. Now, at least in public, most people have started to act obedient to the Party again, even though they no longer believe in it. Although the situation is still nowhere near as bad as it was during the Cultural Revolution, everyone knows that a wrong move could still affect their lives. After all, who doesn't remember the past? Several people in our office had parents and friends who committed suicide during the Cultural Revolution after they were accused of being rightists and capitalist-roaders."

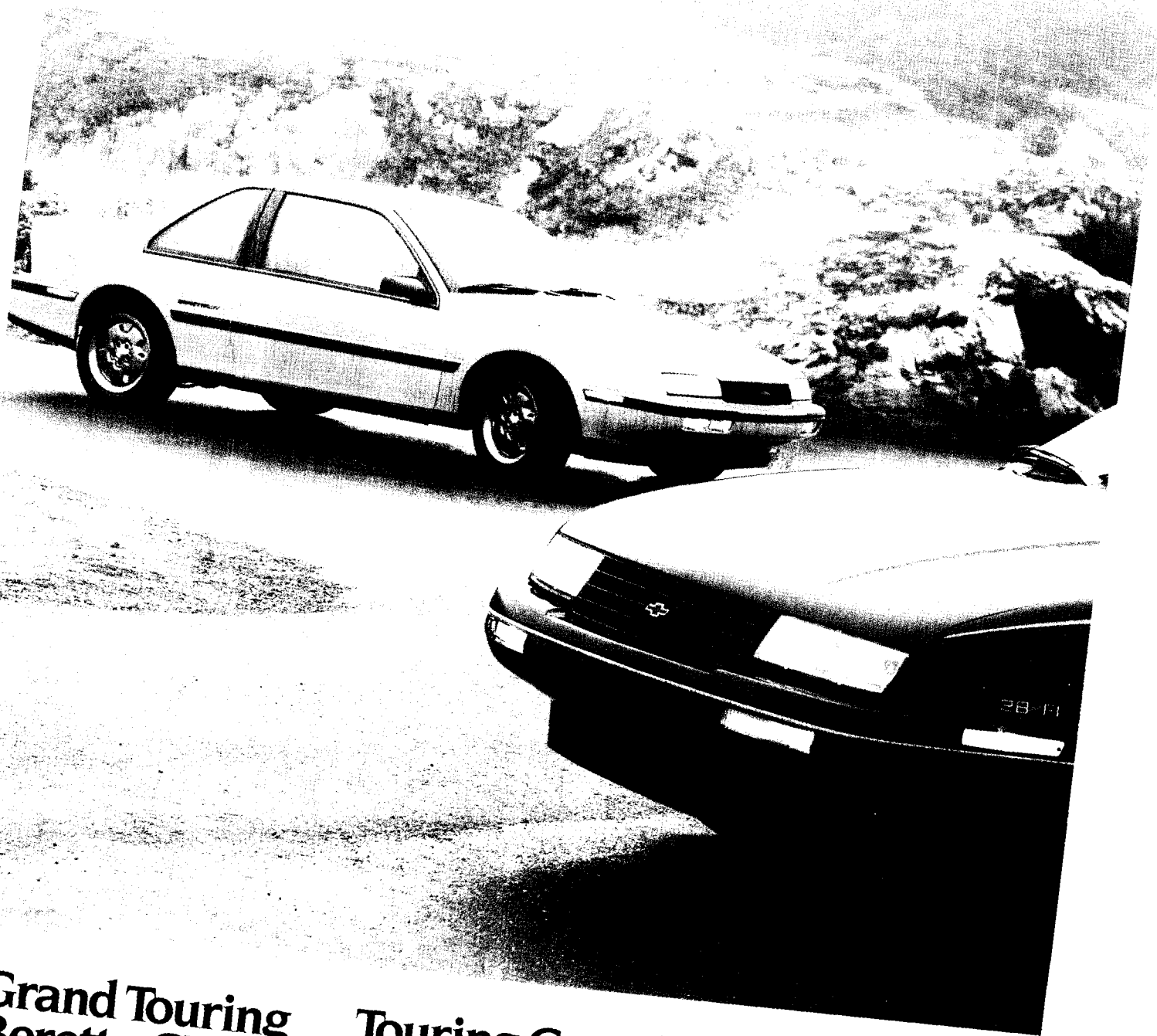
The naiveté of such old-fashioned propagandizing was

sublime. Rather than winning adherents, the Party propaganda organs had become huge, self-defeating engines of disaffection, which caused more and more of the very young Chinese whose support the leadership needed to react almost automatically against anything the Party supported. Far from aspiring to, or being proud of, Party membership, a growing number of young Chinese now wished to distance themselves as much as possible from the Party. Although many ambitious young people worked for and maintained membership, often they did so simply because advancement was impossible in the ranks of government or in state-owned enterprises without it, and because it frequently provided them with valuable perks such as the use of cars, better housing, and opportunities for travel. But, particularly among China's new, foreign-educated elite, there was a growing sense that what was important was not the Party but the outside world, with which they increasingly identified.

By expunging from their midst people like Fang Lizhi, and shortly thereafter the dissident writers Liu Binyan and Wang Ruowang, the older leaders of the Party may have enjoyed a temporary illusion of purification, but actually they were just isolating themselves further from the very sources of support they so urgently needed for credibility. In fact, when it came to questions of trust—the fundamental bond between a government and its people—it was rare to find anyone, particularly in intellectual circles, who still put much faith in the justice or fairness of the Party. The Chinese Communist Party of 1987 was indeed a far cry from that of the days when Party membership conferred on a Chinese the highest social status imaginable and when the Party's leadership was looked up to with blind reverence.

The Party, though still awesomely powerful, had been cut down in stature both because of its recent history and because Chinese now had alternative avenues of advancement. For instance, one could go into business for oneself or go abroad to study and live. Or one could stay home and sink into a more or less individualistic life of self-interest, if not "self-fulfillment." One of the reasons that Fang made the political establishment so nervous was that he was contributing to the creation of exactly these new dimensions of life that fell outside the Party's aegis. He was helping to create an ethos in which dissent was not only thinkable but laudable. So it must have been infuriating, not to say alarming, for Party hard-liners to learn that after his expulsion Fang received an avalanche of sympathetic mail.

"It was very heartwarming to get so many expressions of support," Fang told me. "Some addressed their notes simply to 'Fang Lizhi, Beijing,' and still they got to me! But my wife and I were particularly touched by those people who sent postcards on which they not only expressed their outrage about my loss of job and ouster from the Party but also signed their names and wrote their return addresses, as if to defy the censors and show them that they refused to be cowed into silence."



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Then, with a bemused but satisfied smile, Fang added, "There was a great flood of these letters in late January and February, right after my expulsion. Then, after they had slowly tapered off, a curious thing happened. Suddenly a whole new wave began to arrive. And this time what people wrote was much more complex. Their letters did not simply express sympathy or outrage at my expulsion but contained longer comments on what I had been saying about democracy. At first I couldn't figure out what was going on. Then it dawned on me. They were triggered by the Party's circulation of my speeches for criticism." Fang gave one of his guileless laughs.

When I asked Fang if he would consider joining the Party a third time, he sat for a while without speaking, as if he were pondering a riddle. Finally he said, "Well, should that moment ever arrive, I would first want to see what the situation was like at the time. I certainly don't feel that it is up to me to reform myself. But if the Party changes, well, then I might consider rejoining it."

Fang Reappears

ONCE PURGED FROM THE PARTY, FANG LIZHI AND the writers Liu Binyan and Wang Ruowang disappeared for a while from public view, although hardly from the consciousness of Chinese intellectuals. Of the three, Fang came in for the most frequent and strenuous criticism in Party propaganda, being accused of having almost single-handedly incited the nationwide student demonstrations. Although the activities of all three men were severely limited, they were allowed to receive friends, to continue their work, and to attend certain public functions. Fang was even allowed to go abroad for a scientific meeting. But they remained in a sort of limbo as the contending factions within the Party waged their slow-motion struggle for ideological supremacy and political power.

Although Fang was allowed to teach a limited number of classes and to see friends, he was explicitly forbidden to meet any Western journalists. But with Fang the Party had a problem that it did not have with either Liu or Wang. Fang had already made frequent trips abroad, and thereby had become one of the very few Chinese scientists to gain recognition in foreign scientific circles. In fact, after his expulsion, when Westerners in Beijing began to refer to him as China's Sakharov (an implicit rebuke to pretensions that China was more open than the Soviet Union), some began speculating as to whether Fang might not become China's first Nobel laureate.

Fang's situation was unique for another reason as well. When he was forced to leave Hefei, he had to forfeit the seat he had just won in the fall elections for the local district People's Congress. However, his wife, Li Shuxian, later won a seat in Haidian, the Beijing district in which many of the city's universities are situated. Taking advantage of her new celebrity status, she told foreign reporters that she believed the Party had been wrong to discharge

her husband and that, in due course, history would "prove that he was right." In the months that followed, Li Shuxian came to serve as a kind of local people's advocate, speaking out about the injustice of her husband's situation, championing human rights, and protesting on behalf of her student constituents, who were frequently harassed with unannounced searches of their dormitories and sometimes even detention by security guards.

On February 28 Fang made his first post-purge public appearance, in Beijing, when he showed up at the Fourth National Congress of the Chinese Physics Society to deliver a paper titled "Progress in Modern Cosmology." His return was widely reported in the Chinese press, as was the fact that the meeting was chaired by none other than his old friend at Keda, Guan Weiyan. Clearly, this was an all too self-conscious attempt by the Party to reassure scientists that there was now life after purgatory.

In June, after Fang's application to go abroad had been approved at the very highest level of Party leadership, Fang was allowed to leave China briefly to take part in the annual meeting of the International Center for Theoretical Physics, being held in Trieste. He was refused permission, however, to go on to Great Britain for a conference commemorating the tercentenary of the publication of Isaac Newton's *Principia*. No sooner had Fang gotten out of China than he was descended upon by hopeful interviewers. Instead of holding back, Fang expounded to them on his political views as fearlessly as he had done the past fall in China.

When his friend Tiziano Terzani, the former Beijing bureau chief for *Der Spiegel*, met with him in Italy and asked him what his next political target would be, Fang answered with one word: "Marxism." Terzani appeared surprised by his boldness, and Fang added, "That Marxism no longer has any worth is a truth that cannot be denied. . . . It is a thing of the past—useful to understand problems of the last century, but not those of today. . . . It is like a worn-out dress that should be discarded." When asked what successes he would attribute to the Chinese Communist Revolution, Fang replied, "In China the Communist Party has never had any success. Over the past thirty years it has produced no positive results. . . . That is why the desire for a reformation is so strong, why faith in the Party, especially among young people, has disappeared. . . . In China the Party wants not only to manage politics but to have everything under its control as well, including the way people think and live. . . . To create a real economic democracy in China the Party must diminish this political control—precisely what it fears."

When asked by Lu Keng, whose interview with Fang appeared in the overseas Chinese newspaper *Queens Daily*, why he had been allowed to go abroad while Liu Binyan had not been allowed to accept an invitation from the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa, Fang replied facetiously, "The country apparently needs to learn from the West only in science and technology, but not in the humanities." Then he went on to reiterate his

belief that the Chinese Constitution must prevail over the will of the Party, and that China's future lay in striving for "freedom of speech and freedom of the press, among other freedoms which are provided for by this Constitution." He said, "For only freedom of speech will be able to break the tyranny of a 'one-Party voice' and bring about the realization of political pluralism."

Surprisingly enough, after Fang's return to China there were no immediate political repercussions from these outspoken interviews. By last fall it had become clearer than ever that the punitive measures taken against Party intellectuals were more in the nature of a wrist-slapping than a full-fledged purge. The efforts of the hard-liners ended up only rebounding on them by imbuing their opponents with quasi-mythical status within China and attracting international attention to the very men whose ideas they wished to suppress. Last winter foreign journalists were suddenly writing adulatory accounts of these courageous Chinese defenders of free speech and democracy. The hard-liners seemed to have underestimated the voracious appetite of the West for Communist-bloc intellectuals stamped with the imprimatur of Party persecution. As the political climate once again warmed up, and with the behind-the-scenes support of certain key reform leaders, many Chinese intellectuals who had been in bad Party graces that winter began to leave China for tours abroad, where they were treated like heroes. Liu Binyan was invited to go to Harvard University to become a Nieman Fellow, and also won a lucrative book contract with an American publisher for his autobiography. Fang Lizhi received invitations from Cambridge and American universities to be a visiting scholar and had his collected speeches published in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

WHEN I SAW FANG LAST SEPTEMBER IN BEIJING, I was surprised by the freedom with which he was allowed to socialize and go about his academic life. It was true that he had been forbidden to make political speeches or give interviews to the press, that his phone was bugged, and that his movements were closely watched; but it was also true that he was able to lead a busy life in the capital, teaching, attending scientific meetings, and meeting privately with friends, including some foreigners. In November he had even been allowed to return to Keda to deliver four lectures, although he was watched closely by security guards at all times.



One occasion in particular illustrated the surprisingly permissive post-crackdown policy of the Party toward Fang. After dining with Fang and Li Shuxian at one of the capital's Western hotels, my wife and I introduced them to the NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw, who was in Beijing for the network's week-long series of broadcasts on China. As it happened, Brokaw had just the day before interviewed Zhao Ziyang, the Premier and acting Party General Secretary, and Zhao had spoken about Fang's situation at some length in what appeared to be yet another effort to reassure the outside world that Fang and other Chinese intellectuals would not have their freedom circumscribed any further. Upon meeting Fang, Brokaw asked him if he would like to see the tape of the Zhao interview, which was not scheduled to be shown on Chinese television.

In what was surely one of the most unusual experiences of my many years in China, we soon found ourselves sitting in an NBC screening room, watching China's head of state speak to China's number-one dissident via an American network-news interview. Even stranger than the situation itself was what Zhao was saying about Fang.

"Recently some Communist Party members were expelled from the Party, while others were persuaded to leave the Party," Zhao told Brokaw amiably, taking periodic swigs from a glass of Qingdao beer, which did not appear on the televised interview. "Maybe some people in the U.S. view this as a crackdown, as oppression against intellectuals. I do not agree. . . . I think probably you are already familiar with the name of Mr. Fang Lizhi." As Zhao spoke his name, I glanced over at Fang, who sat bolt upright, as if at attention. He had a slight smile on his lips and a nonplussed expression on his face, and was utterly absorbed in what Zhao was saying. "He is a professor and a well-accomplished physicist. Over the last few years he has made many remarks and speeches and written articles criticizing the Chinese government and the policies of our Party. Sometimes he has even referred to the leadership in our country. He delivered such speeches at universities and also at other places. But he is still working in a very important post, and not long ago he even went abroad for an international academic conference. Moreover, recently he gave an interview to two journalists from Taiwan. [They had been the first journalists in some four decades to visit the mainland from Taiwan.] But he still maintains his original position and ideas. He was a Party member in the past. However, since he has such beliefs, he could no longer remain a Communist Party member. However, he is

still an intellectual and a scientist, and is, moreover, respected for this. As such, he is still able to play his role in scientific and technological areas."

Going on to draw a distinction between the obligations of intellectuals who are Party members and those who are not, Zhao said, "If one joins the Party, one has to observe the regulations, the Party Constitution, and the Party program. . . . If someone cannot observe them, he will be asked to leave. . . . I think the Party itself should have the freedom to decide whether someone should remain in or not. But when intellectuals leave the Party, they will still be respected and will still be able to play their own roles in their own [professional] capacities. I don't think you could call this a crackdown."

Zhao spoke with confidence and conviction, and his words seemed so reassuring that it was difficult to remember that even though he had given his word the previous winter that Party harassment of intellectuals would cease, another wave of punitive action had followed that summer.

Although heartened by Zhao's new moderation and doubtless also by the way Party reformers had managed to bring China back from what seemed to be the brink, Fang remained uncompromising in his attitude about the need for democracy in China. When I asked him what his own generation might leave by way of a legacy to China's youth, he replied simply, "That communism doesn't work. Although one cannot say that every sentence of Marxism-Leninism is wrong, one must admit that its basics are incorrect."

"Are there any Marxist true believers left in the Party?" I asked.

"They are very few. The whole atmosphere in China now is very bad. There is no morality or religion, or, for that matter, anyone in charge of our moral education. Formerly, the Party did this to some extent, but now belief in the Party and Marxism has literally collapsed. When you ask young people what they believe in, they tell you that they don't know. They have lost confidence in contemporary Chinese culture. They have nothing to be proud of. Except for those young people who are still idealistic because they have started to turn to democracy, there is a cultural and political vacuum."

"Do you put any hope in the Party's reform-minded leaders?"

"Perhaps there are a few who are idealistic, but on the whole they are primarily concerned with the question of power."

When I continued to press Fang as to whether he truly doubted that there was any hope for reform from within, he finally relented a bit. "Even if the leaders are not sincere, we must accept that this is the way things are going to be," he said. "One cannot say that success is absolutely impossible. But for now, since the Chinese Communist Party is all there is in power and there are no other demo-

cratic channels open, we can only allow these leaders to lead and hope for the success of the reformers."

Then, brightening somewhat, he added, "The Chinese Communist Party now finds itself in a curious kind of competition with Gorbachev and his idea of *glasnost*. The two socialist countries now seem to be vying with each other to see which one can be most open and, by analogy, be most modern. China's Party leaders do not want to seem to be outdone by Gorbachev, particularly since some people have likened my situation to that of the Soviet physicist Andrei Sakharov, and his situation has now improved so greatly. As far as I am concerned, this kind of competition is a very good thing not only for me but for Chinese intellectuals and China in general. The hard reality is that there is no way now to get the Chinese Communist Party out of power. To try to replace them, or even to persuade them to adopt some other political system, is impossible. This is the difference between dissidence in China and in the West—that dissident opposition can aspire completely to replace certain leaders. So now most Chinese feel that the only way to move forward is to hope that the Communist Party will be able to change its direction and do well by the country. Maybe the next generation will use different tactics and changed political forms, but this will be up to them. Right now, such things are impossible."

In November, when the Thirteenth Party Congress closed, with the reform-minded Zhao Ziyang firmly ensconced as Party General Secretary and with the Maoist hard-liners once again at bay, many Chinese intellectuals heaved a sigh of relief. As the student demonstrations and the ensuing expulsions of Fang and his colleagues receded from memory, and as official publications from the Party became refoliated with calls for political reforms and democratization, it did indeed appear that China had completed yet another of its seemingly endless political circles. In February of 1988 Fang was given a promotion from fourth to second rank of professorship and the Party allowed him to grant a short interview to *The New York Times*. Liberal friends who only the winter before had been gloomy about the prospect for political reform in China were now filled with a new optimism.

But, chastened by the many earlier abortive reform efforts, Fang remained skeptical about the future. When asked by the Hong Kong journal *Baixing Banyue Kan* how he viewed the outcome of the Congress and Zhao's clearly reform-minded speech to the Party, he replied, "It is true that Zhao's report was very stirring. But in his own time Mao Zedong made speeches that were even more stirring." After citing a host of ways in which the Party continued to conduct itself in an undemocratic fashion, Fang went on to warn, "It's not enough just to read of speeches in newspapers. One must always keep one's eye on reality. . . . There are still just too many examples of authorities saying one thing but doing another." □

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A Short Story

3

LEO

BY SHARON SHEEHE STARK

I LAID EYES ON LEO JACOBY FOR THE FIRST TIME A SECOND before he landed on my back, having launched himself from the locust tree that marked the property line between our two houses. Hey, I was somebody's son. When I got my wind back, I went sirening home to my mother.

We were new to Shepherd Hills. In less than a week we'd discovered that our furnace was cracked, that our driveway became a lake when it rained, that the Stuvvers, across the street, expected us to keep our little wicket of ornamental fence painted (as our negligent predecessors had not). Motorists straying into the subdivision were forever getting snared in its endless loops and cul-de-sacs. Our doorbell kept ringing. "How do we get out of here?"

they wanted to know, their voices poised between embarrassment and panic.

"Now we have everything," my mother said, the day Leo flattened me, "including a genuine neighborhood bully."

What was not genuine was her jocular tone. I was an only child, born when she was forty-three and my father fifty, both well past the age when they might feel equal to even minor occasions of harm. So as not to infect me too soon with their rich suspicions, their fully ripened terrors, they managed to project what was, at best, a kind of nervous-shading-to-hysterical turn of good humor. So she threw me in the tub, all the while singing a shrill rendition of *my* song. "Joy to the World," it was called—the one that

begins, "Jeremiah was a bull frog," and ends, "Joy to the fishes in the deep blue sea. Joy to you and me." Humming along, my father scrubbed all traces of Leo off my back. Then they dressed me, not just in clean but in brand new. The ruse worked. That night I slept as if still swaddled in the tenderly feathered, familiar swag of our old life in town.

Leo was ten, maybe eleven. People said he was small for his age (as was I, Jeremiah), though at the time he didn't seem so to me. His face was egglike and, except for what cunning could do to his mouth and eyes when he considered himself unobserved, even pious-looking.

His second assault was more serious, somehow, because it occurred not in some ambiguous border area but in the undisputed middle of my own back yard.

From an old chenille spread I'd fashioned a sort of tent, stretching it between two sentinel-like Scotch pines on either side of the space earmarked for my father's garden. I can still feel the March damp seeping through my jacket's heft as, lying on my back, I tried to heat the shelter with my own breath, lost the while in a maze of the impractical meditations, the answerless questions and reckless conjectures, I was given to then: How many pennies would be required to pave all the driveways of Shepherd Hills? What if someone offered me three wishes to yell "*Jesus cheats!*" in church? And—an awful one—what if I had to decide which parent to rescue from a burning house?

The immediate yield of such thinking was enough fear and guilt to paralyze my brain. Small wonder Leo was able to move right in. Before I knew it, he was deftly wrapping me up in the bedspread. Then he stuffed me, bundled, headfirst into one of our king-sized trash cans and sent me bumping down the long slope of our lawn. I came crashing to rest against a rock in the little stream that ran through the woods behind both our houses.

"You're pushing it, buster," my mother said, as if Leo were right there, in our kitchen. She turned to my father. "Ben," she said, and "Ben" was all she had to say. Although confrontations of any sort horrified this man, he went next door immediately: what wouldn't he do for his Jean?

My parents had not passed the two decades before I was born in idle anticipation of me. Those childless years were the forge of a true marriage, a union that was if not perfect, then certainly impenetrable from without. Not that they actively excluded me. On the contrary, they were attentive, generous, tender, interested. But they enacted these virtues in concert, always, and the ferocious protections accorded me formed a single bulwark between me and the world, a wall so thick with their mutuality—with consultation, confederacy, and habit—that it insulated me from them as well. A child needs to separate his parents from time to time, even as he prays they will never separate. He needs to take one or the other for his own, to make his own faction. But the minutes of our lives were stitched into one lovely fabric, which was my parents' marriage. And me? I lived not in the weft of that cloth but un-

der the amplitude of its shelter, free to leave someday.

My father returned from the Jacobys' looking benevolent and very pleased with himself. "You couldn't ask for a nicer couple," he said. "Most agreeable." My father's hobby was believing in people. "They promised to speak to young Leo," he told Jean.

"Speak?" she said, her fingers working as if connected to her vocal chords. She was struggling to modulate her tone. "That boy is well on the road to Morganza—that says kick-in-the-britches time to me."

"Morganza?" I asked.

"Nothing you need know about," she said severely. "Hateful place, home for incorrigibles." She looked at my father. Then, as always, the very sight of her man tranquilized her. "Truth, Ben—is that so wrong of me?"

"Jean, you're a hard woman," he said, with such delight as to imply that *hard* was in the same class as *compassionate* or *beautiful*.

In the morning light her face was papery, scored with tiny lines. Surely the move to the suburbs was costing her. She'd loved our smallish city apartment, the suite of four rooms of precisely identical dimension, each lamp and candy dish lustered with time and attention, each intractably in its place. When they announced we were moving, the reason too breezily advanced was chrysanthemums. My father had joined the American Mum Society and wanted "the chance to produce a prizewinner."

"Your old pa's a putterer at heart," she said with her patented half-smile, as she wet her index finger, testing the big, shiplike electric iron. I can still see the wreath of sweet, starchy perfume that rose from my father's shirt with her first furious stroke, making her sneeze.

By the time we moved in, the trees of the neighborhood were large enough to promise moderate shade by decade's end. Arborvitae privacy fences were beginning to close off views, though between us and the Jacobys' stood only that spindly locust on a strip of grass dividing our two driveways.

Because their driveway was wider and drier than ours, it was more desirable as a bus stop. I was in second grade, Leo in sixth. The neighborhood was rampant with kids in those days; the boom was still on. A goodly bunch of us were always hunched against the chill, or sitting alone on piles of books, on the tarmac. Some names that come to me offhand: Patty and Scott Tyson, Melody Kolson, Drake Stuver, and Junie Jo Levi, who wore tie-down caps to keep Leo from dripping glue in her hair or pasting her copper curls with icy spring snowballs.

Once he faked a heart attack and, staggering, plowed her across the grass and into our driveway, which happened to be, on that particular day, in its high-water stage. Another time he grabbed the two of us by the scruff of the neck and banged us together. Junie Jew and Jeremiah Jerk, the human chalk erasers. The others laughed in a way I can only describe as a controlled release of something disgusting, the way polite people handle stomach gas at table, their faces sick with restraint.

Around that time I overheard Jean discussing a family friend. "He's that one in a million who can plain get away with things. Escapades the rest of us—well, we wouldn't dare, that's all." It was said with a certain affectionate dismay. From this I extrapolated that Leo must be one in another million, with special privileges under heaven. "Rat face," he called Drake, and when Patty joined the group he'd hold his nose, saying, "I smell dog." Both these kids were older, in junior high. Why didn't they just pop him one?

Among Leo's sundry armaments was an outsized, unsharpened advertising pencil from his father's office. L. J. ENGRAVING, it said, in letters that looked burned into the wood.

Hiding the giant pencil in his sleeve, Leo would pace the tarmac, whistling, waiting; then, the very instant I relaxed my watch, he would charge. This mischief was all the more painful as spring wore on and I wore less and less. "Ow!" I'd holler. "Hey!" And Leo would throw up his arms, one of them stiff as a fence post, in startled innocence. For weeks that spring my tender white body bloomed with tattoo-like rosettes in all the subtle values from injury through healing.

Appalled, Jean made a series of telephone calls to Mrs. Jacoby. But if Leo was punished, it didn't show. So Jean began to keep me indoors until the very last second. Around this time my father cut back to a three-day work week. He needed time, he said, "to prepare my flower bed and rest my elderly bones." He often kicked off these leisure days by driving me to school.

He'd always been an amenable sort, but I sensed on these occasions an even deeper willingness, an almost joyful surrender of edges. With a predatory instinct at least as keen as Leo's, I took shameless advantage of my father. Each day, when I saw the Dairyland approach, I put in a noisy bid for a Dixie Cup.

In memory, the first time I made this demand, it landed on his face like a horsefly. He slapped his cheek and sighed, peered hard at oncoming traffic, as if his argument were with it. Then, "Heck," he said, "what's ice cream anyhow?" "Air and milk!" he told the passing motorists, tight inside themselves. "Hey, air is essential for life, milk for healthy bones and teeth. Think a minute, Ben," he said, addressing his mirror image. "When you really analyze things, really get down to it, hey, what's so blasted wrong with being late for school?" From this small but delectable revelation his body seemed to rise, visibly lighter, and because by then we'd already passed the Dairyland, he went squealing through the Texaco station to avoid the light and then zipped up an alley and around the block.

His "game" was insurance—his word, of course, spoken with a hearty, transforming pride. I grew up considering insurance the highest goal a man could aspire to. Proud of his work, his family, of every gewgaw and gadget he owned, my father liked to call himself "a lucky devil." "Lucky Me," in fact, was *his* song; he used to hum it so

much it drove us half crazy. Jean had no song. She just wasn't the type you'd try to link up with a pop tune.

Once, on the way to school, he refused to buy me a Clark bar, as a matter of principle—*Jean's* principle, for she believed firmly that chocolate was toxic before twelve noon. He hated to say no. When I stopped importuning, he told me a strange story. "This is about a very *unlucky* fellow," he said. "Young man, never been in any type of trouble before, decided out of the blue to go out and steal a car. He was basically a good kid, with an itch to do a little something bad. For the heck of it." My father swiveled right, bugging his dark eyes, his way of beaming forth a story's highlights. "Grabbed one from right there," he said, as we pulled abreast of the local post office. "The idea, you see, was to take a little spin and then return the vehicle while there was still time on the meter. Well, our boy was tooling along some country road, thinking, what a kicker, when he heard some mighty peculiar noises in the back seat. Well, he finally decided to take a peek back there. And what do you suppose he saw?"

"A mallard," I said, because *mallard* was a funny word.

"Nope," he said. "A baby girl. Not even a month old, wrapped in a pink blanket. Our boy hadn't bothered to check for cargo. The baby's mama was in the post office, mailing a package to her young hubby, who was off fighting somewhere in Europe. In fifteen short minutes this kid had gone from your basic good egg to the lowest human form, a kidnapper . . ."

"They sent him to Morganza, right?" I assumed he'd told that story as a cautionary tale, figuring that a kid who carried on so over a Clark bar could easily grow up to be a car thief. But my question went unaddressed. The man beside me wore a deeply private smile. I think he was just being philosophical that day, amazing himself with how life could turn out, and then go right on turning.

ONE MORNING JEAN DECIDED TO COME ALONG. "Hey, great!" my father said. "We'll take the day off, all three of us." "Partners in crime," he teased. This three-way truancy represented a giant leap for Jean, given her age and tendencies. To my surprise she said, "Just once wouldn't hurt, I s'pose. But just this once, mind you."

First we drove out to a small farm and got some cuttings for his mums. The bed was already prepared. It was a small plot into which he'd spaded rich black dirt, everything raked to a grainy fineness.

From there we went to Gardenland for supplies. As usual my father did the salesman's job for him. "Your five-ten-five—won't burn the roots. Better stuff than the Sears brand, right? How do your prices compare generally? Unbeatable, huh? Well, you get what you pay for."

At all this the salesman nodded, Jean observing, with adoring disbelief, the predictable ways of the man she had married, this good man who nudged people into comforting lies about themselves.

After lunch someone suggested Fun City, a dilapidated park not far from home. Most of the rides had long been idle by then, but mothers still brought pre-schoolers to the swing set and to a toothless man with ponies—a sad, scabby lot, pawing at the packed earth, not wanting to be bothered. My father gave the man two quarters: one of his ponies would carry me thrice around a walking trail for fifty cents. My parents walked on either side of the creature, each of them gripping me, a skittish city kid, around the waist. Nervously, I kept swiveling back and forth, and after all these years I still feel I caught the two of them at something: their eyes were fixed on each other, their fingers entwined as if I, Jeremiah, were merely a legitimate excuse to touch in public.

Except for the brat, ours was a serene neighborhood, one of those subdivisions begun after the war but before the days of false brick and vinyl siding. With a matter-of-fact profligacy we covered varnished oak with hi-lo carpeting and accepted as our due the ceramic tile, the stone hearth, the mud room, the rumpus room, the all-birch kitchen. In addition to a finished basement our house boasted a wide center hall and what they called a half-attic—a small, angular room with a sealed round window, like a ship's porthole, that the former owners had fixed up for a maiden aunt. Our neighbors were fanatical about upkeep, and we were doing our level best to keep up.

"It was a mistake," my father said one evening, meaning the purchase of our excellent house. He'd been outside, trying to finish mowing before dark. He'd collapsed, exhausted, on the couch. The same with painting trim a week later. In his intense, meticulous way he'd been inching around the mullions when his arm started to shake. Enormous sweat globules stood on his brow as Jean helped him off the step stool and led him inside. His skin had a harsh bluish cast that made his features seem pasted in place. With longish, thinning hair, he looked like an old woman, I saw. He looked like his wife, gray herself and delicate from indoor living.

She, meaning well, attempted to finish these tasks. What can I say? The mower stalled. She didn't know how to restart it. One day Mr. Jacoby offered to help but, perhaps sensing some hidden fee, she said, "Thank you, no." She hated painting—the tedium, the mess. "We'll have to get someone. But who. *Who?*" she mumbled, looking around, as if that's how one went about locating a yardman. In this new place we were all children.

Across the street the Stivers were adding on. For many months that spring a staggered stack of yellow bricks stood like courthouse steps in their side yard. The setup was ideal for King of the Hill, which I often played alone, fantasizing Apaches but looking for Leo, hoping for him, whom I would now lord over and laugh at and vanquish. One Saturday, as I stood surveying my domain, pondering my how-cans and what-ifs, he sneaked up on my blind side and swept me off the ledge like a speck of dust. My ankle cracked in two places.

From the emergency room we went directly to Leo's

house. At the door Jean shook my crutches like a fist while my father thrust me up, incontestable proof, our right of entry.

I remember that their front room was empty except for a bean-bag chair, a yucca plant, and an upright white piano. Mrs. Jacoby was quick to explain the paucity. "We're waiting," she said, glancing cautiously at her husband, "till we can afford to do it right." Mr. Jacoby hurried out of the room and returned with tall glasses of iced tea.

"I'd rather have soda pop," I said.

My father poked me, but Mr. Jacoby said, "Hey," and produced, in short order, a can of cold Coke.

The Jacobys wore solemn faces, but no, I cannot say they looked sorry. The three of us were lined up in front of the fireplace, which contained now, in April, a basket of plastic flowers. Between my parents I listed to the right like Tiny Tim.

In a peasant blouse and denim mini-skirt, Mrs. Jacoby stood a full generation away from Jean, whose rayon print fell primly to mid-calf. The younger woman's hand on my back was more a taking-charge than an act of sympathy or contrition.

"Needless to say," she said, "Lisle and I regret very much that this had to happen."

"Had to?" Jean crossed her arms. Her chin dipped severely.

"Listen, maybe there's something you should know before you"—Mr. Jacoby paused—"go off half-cocked." His large, sculpted head seemed to belong on a larger man's body, or on a famous statue.

They were direct in this, businesslike, unblinking. Mrs. Jacoby said, "I'm surprised nobody's told you."

"Two full months we've been here," Jean said. "And hardly a body's gone out of their way to say how-do, let alone fill us in."

"These days," Mr. Jacoby said, edging close to his wife, "people have distractions."

"We live day to day," his wife said.

At this my parents stiffened, sniffed as if alerted, as if they were about to be gobbled up or done out of something.

"Leonard's IQ is one of the highest ever recorded in the school district," Mrs. Jacoby blurted, out of left field.

My father drew a breath so deep it graveled his tone. "Pardon me, ma'am, but how does IQ figure—"

With a gesture I now see as smug and presumptuous, Mr. Jacoby raised a splayed hand. *Stop*, he seemed to be saying. *For your own good, give it up now*. When the tension in the room was right—in the silence—he said, "Our son is dying." Mrs. Jacoby held Jean's eyes with a long, unwavering gaze.

We left in clumping confusion. Thoughtful across the yards, we stopped to check my father's cuttings, which sweated in their little fruit-jar greenhouses. We went in the back way, where, on the white walls of the mud room, the late light lay condensed to ingots of deep gold.

Jean's self-control was such that all she ever showed of

rage was its surfeit, the stuff too much for her craw, what escaped from between her teeth. One unmistakable sign of fury was a shift in tempo, so that suddenly she'd be vacuuming with the speed of a silent movie. Or racing the dishes off the table. Or, as now, in the still unfamiliar house, humping around, switching on lights, rattling bags, opening and shutting the oven, mumbling, muttering. In the meantime, my father hovered and bumbled around her, like some clumsy dog who'd done wrong. Finally he just reached out and snagged her close, steering her this way and that until the two of them, like a single wounded beast, began to weave down the hall to their bedroom, which had been moved in recent weeks from the second floor to the downstairs den. Outraged, I made my own way to bed, faking a clattering fall in the hallway to show how resoundingly they'd failed as parents.

MICA COUNTRY

Here in the poorest mine country
in the dust of Dog Day drought,
the road itself glitters and weeds
along the bank and meadow sparkle.

In the dust of Dog Day drought,
dirt of fields and spoil heap sides
along the bank and meadow sparkle,
and mud in the stream, all gilded.

Dirt of fields and spoil heap sides
and manure piles show millions,
and mud in streams, all gilded
with little mirrors, like fish scales,

and manure piles show millions
where a farmer plows a milky way
of little mirrors, like fish scales,
and each mote and grain is brighter,

where a farmer plows a milky way,
than dew or facet or window,
and each mote and grain is brighter
to reflect in luminous soil

through dew or facet or window,
the glare of blinding poverty
reflected in the luminous soil
here in the poorest mine country.

—Robert Morgan

In retrospect, I see that the other thing between them and me was knowledge. Over time that knowledge has taken on a solid look, has lodged in memory like something black on an x-ray. That's how very sick my father was at the time. The Jacobys had cut deeper into us that day than they had intended. My father's frenzied solicitude toward Jean was an effort to make it up to her. For himself. For Leo. For the fact that we were all hostages to these dying people.

As for Leo, well, who can say that given a longer life, he wouldn't have spent it burglarizing rest homes or slander-ing his faithful wife in singles bars. But we—everybody—gave him the benefit and hated ourselves for it. In the weeks that followed, my father began spending more and more time in the hospital or home in bed. Jean was occupied with duty or dread. So I mostly rode the disgusting bus. Leo ate my double-dessert lunches en route, defaced my homework. He'd been in remission, his parents had said, nearly a year. I think we thought of him as hosting an elaborate internal menace. One shake and we'd wake up a nest of army ants, who'd be all over him in seconds.

Every Sunday at exactly five the three of us sat down to a fat capon. After one of these meals Jean laid down her fork and looked hard at my father. "Has it occurred to you that maybe the Jacobys are ly— *mistaken*? That boy looks hale enough to me."

"Cures are not unheard of," he said, lifting an orange from the fruit bowl. For a second her eyes on him shone, impudent with hope, but he was busy with the orange, his trembling fingers digging at the rind, dropping it, trying again. Jean blinked and took the orange away. "Jerry, don't rock back on your chair," she said, as she proceeded to skin that orange alive.

My crutches. Having quickly mastered them, I rode them in high style, as if they were circus stilts, or a unicycle. They were my ticket to privilege and tender regard. They worked their magic everywhere but with Leo, to whom these appliances, with their six weeks' useful life, must have seemed symbolic less of disability than of repair: *I would heal*. One morning in late May, as I stood with the bus crowd, Leo took them. Recently he'd spent some time in the hospital and had returned hairless and skinny, prone to throwing up on the bus.

Today I know what the effort must have cost him. Mr. Jacoby, who'd been replacing cedar shakes, had left an aluminum ladder standing against the house. Somehow managing to juggle his book bag, his lunch, and my crutches, Leo scrambled up the ladder. At the top he tossed the crutches onto the garage roof. He then descended, hauled the ladder into the garage, and still found strength to drag down the heavy track door. Utterly bereft, I sat down on the macadam and hollered my head off.

And Jean came running. Halfway across the front lawn she stopped. That moment of hesitation, I'm sure, is even longer in memory than in fact. But she was Jean. Surely she would have wrestled with herself a second or two, her fingers drumming, tugging on their invisible strings. Defi-

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ant to the jawbone, Leo was taunting her now with his arms crossed. Then, sensing something excessive (and grown unappeasable) in her, he lunged for the post that held our two mailboxes, grabbing hold with both hands. The other children stood like trees with their leaves turned against bad weather. Nothing good would come of this. They expected the worst, in fact; they expected to be embarrassed.

In the meantime Jean was struggling, straining against what must have been the stolid, obstructing arm of civilization itself. Then, chopping at the air, with a small, cat-like cry of surprise, she charged, flying at Leo, detaching him from his stanchion as effortlessly as she tore cobwebs from rafters. This ease must have amazed her most of all, and she hesitated another endless second before taking his shoulders and shaking that sick boy until I thought his shiny head would fly off.

This next part I cannot swear to. It happened either in fact or in a dream or both: Mrs. Jacoby's face at an upstairs window. She is clutching something to her—a pillow? A cloth toy? The early light is shellacking the glass, but I sense her despair just before she turns away, for she had finally run dry.

Not so my father. Where had *he* come from? In bedroom slippers and robe he was on the move, shuffling across the grass, his arm out like a penalty call. When he reached the combatants, he circled left, right, ducking, hacking at Jean's arm before taking a two-fisted, infantile grip on the back of her belt. In his condition he was no match for a provoked female, but he gained some leverage by bracing himself against a fence rail, from which position he tugged at her as someone might restrain a horse. In a voice soft as chalk, he said, "Damn it, Jean, get the hell in the house."

He was so insubstantial and she so heedless that I cannot believe his efforts registered. When she finally let go, it was because she was spent, or because the unseemliness of it all had caught up with her. Suddenly she was throwing her arms out from her, as if disaffiliating herself from them. Then, drawing herself up tall and schoolmarmish, she stood a long time, just squinting up the street. "The bus," she said. She went in then, leaving my father and Leo linked, hand to elbow, as if they were about to cross a busy street. They were both bald, blazingly white in the morning sun. Clothes hanging, bones poking through, they were the spitting image of each other. They could have been father and son.

THURSDAY OF THAT WEEK WAS LEO'S LAST DAY OF school. That night he was rushed to the hospital, and from there, well, nobody knew exactly. Years later, when I asked, Jean said they had buried him furtively, like a mistake—no viewing, no funeral. I didn't tell her that at the time she had said he went to Morganza; that to this day the words *mortal* and *incorrigible* are synonymous to me and that I look upon dying as a capital offense, the

only crime aside from jealousy that is, at once, its own punishment.

My father lasted through the summer and into the early days of autumn. His mums came into bloom in time to make a pungent funeral bouquet. They looked spectacular to me, but, what with everything else, they never made it to the contest.

He was ambitious for one so frail. Twice that summer he moved, the first time on his own steam, lugging, over Jean's nearly hysterical objections, his Sunday suit, Boy Scout Handbook, and down pillow from the den to their old room, the master bedroom on the second floor. A month later, in the swelter of August, he insisted on moving to the attic. This time Jean asked Mr. Stuver to help get my single bed up the narrow steps. They tucked it under the eaves, under the round window, which presided over that dim little space like a maniacally cheerful sky-blue moon. Having lost my bed, I moved to the guest room. Everything was getting shuffled; my father was leaving a level at a time.

During those last months he could not bear the lovely sight of his life's partner. "Jean," he'd say, "I smell something burning." "Jean, the phone." My leg had healed, freeing me to take full advantage. Gladly I ran up and down the steps, best friend now to both parents. In a manly—no, *husbandly*—way I held forth about the weather and the headlines, while helping Jean with the almost sacramental task of tending my father's garden. I showed the visiting nurse to the attic, read to my father, and acted as courier, carrying messages from her who could on some days barely deliver them out of her mouth.

Somehow I must have intuited that what I was about to lose went beyond my paternal root to something deeper, the root of that root, my father's memory. I asked him questions nobody else could answer, about his parents, his grandparents, his life before Jean.

"What else about Grampy?"

"Oh, did I mention his watch? It was big and round, with all seven planets on its face."

"Silver or gold?"

"Rolled gold—better than plate."

The room retained the aromatic smell of newish wood, which the heat deepened to something that made me think of incense. On the single straight wall hung a print left by the room's last occupant. In it a pretty, flax-haired child held a luminous dove. It was mounted in an oval Victorian frame.

"Were you a delinquent? Like Leo?"

My father cackled. "I was a little priss," he said. "At three, when my mother took me to visit the neighbors, I checked their ledges for dust. I straightened their rugs."

"Yuck."

All those weeks, even as I enjoyed my improved status, my privileged visitorhood, I must have sensed the true significance of the new order, that the current gulf between my parents was only another measure of their intimacy. Day by day I felt growing in me a terrible meanness, an in-

explicable rage. "And what was the dog's name?" I asked for the twentieth time.

"Luke," he said.

"What happened to old Luke?" As if I didn't know.

"He got hit by a meat wagon," my father said. He could have said the dog was killed, and left it at that. But no, he always added the silly part about the meat wagon, slapping it on like mud on a bee sting.

"Splat," I said, giggling.

But my father wasn't finished. "I bawled my head off, you know." Breathless now, he struggled to an upright position. The room was like an oven, and his lips were parched, even as he shivered with chill. I poured him some ice water, quickly, so as not to miss a word. This part was new to me.

"Don't cry," my mama said. "Just remember, Benjamin, someday you'll see Luke in heaven with Jesus and His angels." But my grammy was there that day. She was the sharp kind, like your mother. "Good God, Addy, don't tell him that," she said. "Dogs don't have souls. Luke is done for."

My father's head jerked back and he looked up at me, astonished. An instant later he went vague, precarious, and just as I thought he might cry, I blurted, "I'll tell you who's done for. Old Leo is done for. It's a dirty lie he's in Morganza. He's down there—" I pointed to the braided rug. "Leo's shoveling coal with his big pencil. Leo's making snowballs in hell."

"Jerry!"

"Leo's picking his nose in hell." I giggled some more. "Leo puts out flames with piss." I went on like that, and when I could no longer outdo myself in grossness, irreverence, and spite, I looked up. "Is that so wrong of me?"

"All things considered?" he said. "Yes, I should say it is."

"Good, I'm glad," I said, crawling across my old bed to a spot by the round blue window. Outside, the grass was going ragged with late summer, housewives on webbed lounges lay baking in the sun, their kids squealing without sound in round blue plastic pools that echoed the window in which I, absolutely still and thinking my thoughts, felt embedded. What I was thinking about was death and Leo and me, in that order. I saw all three of us at once, the way a cartoonist might depict a dog chasing a cat chasing a mouse. Then Leo was overtaken. Leo and death became one runner, and that's how I kept Leo alive—as he will be all my life. He is the one I look for over my shoulder, as I had done the day I played King of the Hill, as I was doing at that moment, perched on my father's anklebones, surveying the green kingdom of my childhood.

I got on my knees then and pressed closer, nose to the glass, until the street, directly below, reeled into my vi-

sion. Our locust tree. The deft suggestion of fence. And down there, by the double mailbox, Jean and Mrs. Jacoby, each fanning herself with a packet of letters, their heads nodding, their free hands touching. I watched the women with suspicious eyes. They'll be friends, I thought bitterly.

ONE RAINY SATURDAY IN LATE SEPTEMBER, I SAT watching my father emerge from drugged sleep. Those last weeks each time he awoke, he looked perplexed and then, after orienting himself, disappointed for a while, before a sort of grim acceptance set in. I waited out all his stages before putting my question to him. "And what happened to the boy who stole the baby? You never said."

He began to soften, as he had those mornings in the car, when he'd hit upon an excuse to buy me ice cream for breakfast. His wasted face bloomed with relief. "Nothing bad, mind you," he said. "He brought the baby back immediately. The law showed mercy. He and the young woman became very good friends, and when her husband was killed in the war, he married her and the three of them moved to another town."

I looked at him, his eyes burning in deep purple holes, his skin ungodly bright. So it must be, Leo, when the light from a man's deepest soul becomes a shallow thing. The law showed mercy, Leo, and the rain was a kind of grace as I clambered over his legs to take my place at the round window.

Down below, the driveway is awash, three pre-schoolers high-stepping through in tulip-colored boots. I look at the staggered rooftops rising to the top street and think, Not *neighborhood* but *village*, the rain silvers everything so, dulls the hopeful colors, makes us all beautifully old. I can't see your house from here, but in the rainy-day dark of it your parents are making desperate love. Everything is fluid, moving, nothing prevails, not even my meanness. Look at the lawns and late flowers, low clouds and tangled streets, the sheets left on the Tysons' line, my selfishness indistinguishable now from sorrow; and death, gently blending in, altering forever the smell of the attic.

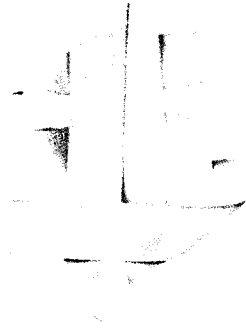
From behind me then came a thin strand of sound, low and broken. I thought he was moaning and, frozen, I could not turn to him at first. Minutes passed, the rain drummed down, and in the same instant that I recognized the tune, it came to me, like shocking news, that on this day of measured time I, Jeremiah, was still a child. I left the window and went to him, driving myself tight against the bony harp that was my father's body. He went on humming my song, stopping often for breath, until we both went to sleep.

Leo, Leo, my incorrigible friend. Joy to you. And me. □

Questions of artistic freedom and the future of ballet are arising, in an era when corporate and individual patrons pick up where the government leaves off and some donors aspire to a controlling interest

ROOM ENOUGH TO MOVE

BY HOLLY BRUBACH



THE SO-CALLED DANCE BOOM HAS COME TO AN END. George Balanchine is dead, Mikhail Baryshnikov is getting into the movies, and the people who ten years ago were signing up in droves for dance classes have lately been scouring Gelsey Kirkland's memoirs for evidence of the ballet world's sordid underside. The fans have fallen away; the devotees remain. Owing largely to the Reagan Administration's cuts in government funding for the arts, the expansionism that characterized the seventies has given way to the consolidation of the eighties.

Consolidation is the prevailing spirit in artistic matters, too. In the absence of some full-grown choreographer to carry on the renaissance that Balanchine superintended, most ballet companies are biding their time, conserving the existing repertory, resuscitating ballets that have been defunct for years. American Ballet Theatre last month unveiled its lavish new production of Leonide Massine's *Gaité Parisienne*; the Joffrey, which has made revivals its stock in trade, has just presented its reconstituted version of Vaslav Nijinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*—a ballet that hadn't been seen in seventy-four years. And this, presumably, is the direction things will take until some new genius comes along and declares himself in terms that we can all understand. Some people, having witnessed the recent golden age, say dismally that there will never be another Balanchine; they doubt that another choreographer's work will ever stir in us the complex feelings that his did or will ever come to occupy such a prominent place in our experience. These people are trying to come to terms with the idea of ballet without Balanchine, and no matter how they figure it, they come up with something less than what ballet has been. But for some of the rest of us, who feel Balanchine's loss just as keenly but who believe that ballet in all its possibilities has not yet been exhausted, the question is not whether ballet will survive but how it can proceed.

The New York City Ballet under Balanchine was a benevolent dictatorship in which the choreographer's authority was never questioned and the board of directors served his purposes. The board was notoriously weak; some people said that Balanchine had stacked it with people he knew he could count on to see things his way. As Balanchine's disciples scattered and started companies of their own (Kent Stowell and Francia Russell in Seattle, Todd Bolender in Kansas City) or took over existing companies (Maria Tallchief in Chicago; Patricia Wilde in Pittsburgh), they and other artistic directors looked to the NYCB as a model, not because they presumed to compare themselves to Balanchine but because they understood, firsthand, the virtues of his situation. They understood that the crux of his being able to take ballet where it had never been before was his autonomy: Balanchine was answerable to no one, though he respected his audience.

Lately, however, the cutbacks in government grants to dance companies have strengthened the influence of the donors who pay for ballet, and have in many cases tipped the balance of power in their favor. People who make sizable contributions to their local ballet company want to know what they're getting for their money; they want a say in how it's spent. Like the rest of us, they have their own favorite ballets in the repertory, their own opinions about what choreographers ought and ought not to be doing. They have their own ambitions, some of them social, which they may intend to hitch to a cultural institution.

The New York City Ballet is no longer considered the model: impractical, it is now called, or quaint, as if it were a relic of some other, more innocent era, before leveraged buyouts and risk arbitrage made life the cutthroat game it is today. Worst of all, perhaps, many people dismiss conditions at the New York City Ballet as appropriate only to Balanchine. "Artistic freedom was fine for *him*," one mem-

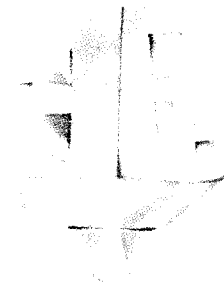


ber of the board of directors of a major ballet company told me recently. Everyone else, to this way of thinking, needs a guiding hand, someone to watch over him and steer him clear of his own mistakes. Some recent events in the ballet world—for instance, a coup d'état staged four years ago by the San Francisco Ballet's board of trustees, who replaced the artistic director with someone whose ballets were more to their liking—would have been unthinkable twenty years ago, but today they are accepted as a matter of course. It's a different world now, people say, and shrug.

As a result, the circumstances in which choreographers work have grown increasingly straitened—straitened artistically as well as financially—and the policies by which many American ballet companies now function are being set not by the artists but by corporate executives. For choreographers who feel that these terms in some way compromise their work, the alternative is to go elsewhere—often to Europe, where ballet companies have no boards of directors, where opera houses are subsidized by the state, and where a choreographer is accountable only to himself and perhaps, in the long run, to the reigning politician. William Forsythe, the thirty-eight-year-old American choreographer who directs the Frankfurt Ballet, has worked in Europe for the better part of his career. Mark Morris, a thirty-one-year-old American modern-dance choreographer, has accepted the invitation of the city of Brussels to move there with his company, which has been based in Seattle. That the two most talented American choreographers of their generation have chosen to work abroad is our loss and a reason to question the wisdom of our policies where the arts are concerned.

A generation ago in this country ballet artistic directors were founding their own companies and choosing their trustees; today the trustees of those companies, most of which have outlived their founders, are in the position of selecting the artistic directors. The questions posed by this turnabout—questions of where the responsibility for artistic policy ultimately lies, of who has the final decision-making power, of whose money pays for ballet and how many strings are attached to it—are unsettling and new. With no precedents to look to, most ballet companies are making up the answers as they go along.

Here are two cautionary tales—one set in San Francisco, where private support for the ballet predominates; the other in Frankfurt, where the ballet is funded by the state. Both cities have generously provided for their companies, and yet the conditions conducive to artistic growth continue to elude them. Most balletgoers have no interest in administrative matters like marketing and funding; this is the backstage machinery, presumed to be in good working order as long as the curtain goes up on schedule. But gradually we are being forced out of our complacency. The issues raised by companies today and the way they are run are too complex to be solved at a glance, and too serious to go unattended. No one who cares passionately about ballet can afford to ignore the ways in which its means of support now shape what we see on the stage.



San Francisco

SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT THE BRIGHT NEW ERA IN the San Francisco Ballet's history dates back to the completion of the new building, in 1983; others think that that was when the trouble started, when the dancers and the staff were no longer crammed into make-shift quarters and the SFB lost the sense of family that characterizes most dance companies, becoming a cool, efficient, impersonal operation. Before, the SFB had been housed in a converted garage on Eighteenth Avenue, with only four studios, two bathrooms, and one working shower to accommodate both the company and the school. Some of the administrative staff's offices were in an adjacent apartment building; the rest were around the corner and four blocks down Geary Street, above the House of Bagels. The studios were small and dark, poorly ventilated, with metal beams across the ceiling. When the women were lifted in rehearsals, they had to duck their heads, a movement that became so ingrained that one longtime staff member claimed he could see the ballerinas flinch at the top of a lift when they danced on the opera-house stage. These conditions were deplorable but no worse than those of most regional ballet companies.

The new building, which cost \$13.8 million, has eight studios, most of them skylit, all outfitted with state-of-the-art video equipment. The ceilings are fifteen feet high. The fluorescent lighting is pink, which is easier on the eyes and more becoming to people whose job it is to look at themselves in a mirror all day long. The mirrors are canted at a three-degree angle, so that a dancer being lifted can see herself. In the women's changing rooms are foot-level sinks, for wetting toe shoes. There is a physical-therapy room, equipped with massage tables, ice packs, heat packs, electrodes for deep muscle relaxation, and a Jacuzzi. People in San Francisco talk about the new building proudly, as the measure of the community's investment in the company, and as the best facility for ballet in the country—maybe the world.

It took a little less than a year after the SFB's new home was completed for the trustees to realize that their company was not quite up to the caliber of their building. The best facility for ballet in the country—maybe the world—merits a "world-class" company, and the San Francisco Ballet, while it had the respect of many critics and the loyalty of a broad audience, was decidedly not world-class. The trustees had been driving a Chevrolet convertible; they aspired to a Mercedes sedan.

What they traded in was a homegrown institution, co-directed by Lew Christensen and Michael Smuin. Smuin was a local boy who had joined the San Francisco Ballet in 1957, while he was still in high school; had gone off to New York, where he distinguished himself as a principal dancer at American Ballet Theatre; and eventually had returned home, to help Lew Christensen. Christensen hadn't founded the company, but his ties to it were so long-standing that most people in San Francisco considered it his. His brothers William and Harold had taken it over in 1938, five years after it was established, as part of the opera, and had made it independent. In 1951 Lew, a tall, ruggedly handsome man who had danced the title role in Balanchine's *Apollo* at the Metropolitan Opera, in New York, was named director. By the time Smuin arrived back home, in 1973, Christensen was in his sixties and his health was failing.

Smuin was young, eager, on the make—a hustler and a charmer. There is a story that in 1977, when he was selected to be on the dance panel of the National Endowment for the Arts, he got to the first meeting ten minutes early to rearrange the place cards so that he would be sitting next to Merrill Brockway, whom he knew by reputation as the series producer of *Dance in America* on PBS. By the meeting's end Brockway had agreed to see the company. The next season *Dance in America* televised Smuin's *Romeo and Juliet*, the first of four programs devoted to the San Francisco Ballet—one of which, Smuin and Christensen's *Cinderella*, is the highest-rated show in the history of the series.

Over time Smuin's choreography came to dominate the repertory and gave the company a style all its own—brash, unabashedly entertaining, flashy (some said glitzy), and theatrical. Thanks largely to the exposure it received on television, the San Francisco Ballet had a national profile. Under Smuin the company came to be regarded as a cut above the other so-called regional companies and a close fourth to the Joffrey, which ranked just behind the New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre. By the early 1980s audiences had more than doubled. Even so, the man who emerged as the hero wasn't Smuin but the SFB's president and general manager, Richard E. LeBlond, Jr., who retired as manager last year and continues to work for the company's endowment, which he founded.

LeBlond, a former college professor of sociology, had been brought in in 1975, on the heels of the SOB, or Save Our Ballet, campaign—a last-ditch grass-roots effort that had rescued the company from the verge of bankruptcy. A tall, balding man, with tortoiseshell glasses and a gray goatee, he strolls as he talks, soliloquizing and abstractedly gazing out the window at the horizon as his listener takes notes. Around the San Francisco Ballet, LeBlond was regarded as a gentleman and a scholar—a “man of vision,” in the words of one staff member, whom he hired. LeBlond instituted departments for marketing and development; he rallied wealthy patrons and high-level corporate executives. Within two years he had wiped out the company's

\$850,000 deficit, and for the next decade he kept the San Francisco Ballet on solid financial ground.

Some observers think that the not-so-distant memory of near-bankruptcy and the fear that it might happen again at any time gave LeBlond and the board of trustees clout they had never had before. Suddenly the artistic staff was beholden to the business staff, and though Michael Smuin didn't act particularly grateful—didn't, in fact, turn up for some board meetings—LeBlond and the people he had assembled to support the company gradually came to be convinced that its fate was in their hands, that it was they, as trustees, who made the dancers' work possible, and not the other way around. The company's highest-paid employee was consistently LeBlond, with Smuin second.

THERE WERE THOSE WHO FOUND SMUIN AN UNSYMPATHETIC character, high-handed and too preoccupied with his choreography to take much of an interest in administrative affairs. Clearly he had talent—the sort of energy and showmanship that are signs of a real choreographer—but his talent was unruly, and some people would have preferred that it follow a straight course. When the time came to let Smuin go, the board charged that his free-lance work on musicals (*Sophisticated Ladies*) and movies (*The Cotton Club*) was distracting him from his job as the company's artistic director and that his programming wasn't sufficiently classical. There were other complaints—legitimate ones—about the training, which Smuin had often entrusted to guest teachers, resulting in stylistic inconsistencies and signs of technical neglect. As proof of declining artistic standards, the board cited reviews from the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival, in Los Angeles, including one in the *Christian Science Monitor* that summarized the SFB's performance as “an evening of glitz, glitter, and blatant sensuality—an embarrassment not only to the company but to its country.” The trustees also pointed to the funding cutbacks by the National Endowment for the Arts for the 1985–1986 season, for which the company had asked for \$500,000 and been granted \$144,000 (the year before, it had requested \$450,000 and received \$208,044), as evidence that the SFB was slipping in the nation's esteem, although the Endowment that year dealt similar cutbacks across the board.

The disagreements grew loud and nasty, and today, four years after the fact, they don't bear much going into. What matters in retrospect is that outraged members of the ballet audience banded together and waged an unsuccessful proxy campaign to keep Smuin and replace the company's board of trustees, and that Smuin, who had the support of the majority of the dancers, interviewed for his old job. In the midst of all the controversy Lew Christensen died.

There was speculation at the time, and there is some evidence to support it, that LeBlond had orchestrated Smuin's dismissal in an (ultimately foiled) attempt to bring in a friend in his place. At any rate, LeBlond apparently felt secure enough to issue an ultimatum: either Smuin

would go or he would. What is most remarkable is not that he may have acted with malice aforethought but that the board, when pressed, chose its administrator over its artistic director—or, rather, chose its administrator's vision of the San Francisco Ballet over its artistic director's. It was LeBlond who thought bigger and who appealed to the board's ambition, by talking about how the center of ballet in America could shift westward, if only the SFB would realize its potential; about the new building as "a statement of what this community expects from us"; about the SFB's role in the future, what with the Pacific Ocean soon to replace the Atlantic as "the trading lake of the world" and the company so fortuitously poised on its shore.

In the end the board renewed Smuin's contract for the following season, 1984–1985. The cover of the program that season featured a photograph of Evelyn Cisneros as Cinderella, superimposed on the words "San Francisco Ballet, Directors: Lew Christensen and Michael Smuin," with her arms in second position, covering Smuin's name. Helgi Tomasson was hired as his replacement.

Born in Iceland and trained at the Royal Danish Ballet, Tomasson had joined the NYCB in 1970 as a principal, having danced with the Harkness and Joffrey ballets; in 1982, with Balanchine's blessing, he began to try his hand at choreography. Tomasson has a compact build, even features, and a manner that is cautious and reasonable. His gestures are concise, never extravagant; he talks in an even tone. His ballets, too, have an evenness about them—they seem to take place in some halcyon world where the sun is always shining and nothing much happens. If the effect is sometimes stultifying, at least his ballets don't ever offend the discriminating viewer, as Smuin's occasionally did. In fact, if anything, Tomasson's choreography is fatally polite—relentlessly classical and scrupulously musical.

Tomasson is more of a diplomat than Smuin ever was, willing to meet with board members and discuss his projects, to greet patrons at intermission, to make an appearance at the occasional cocktail party. Where before the company's dancing, however bravura, was blurred around the edges, now it is genteel and speedier on the whole; the footwork is cleaner; the girls are stronger in the metatarsal. The repertory is above reproach, a well-balanced mixture of Balanchine classics like *Theme and Variations* and *Rubies* and ballets by Jerome Robbins, Lew Christensen, and Tomasson himself. Revisionist history has been written. According to LeBlond, the company under Tomasson is concentrating once again on technique and musicality. "The spirit of Lew Christensen must be looking down on us," he says piously.

LEBLOND HAD ALWAYS CONTENDED THAT A BALLET company's administrative staff needed to be as creative in its way as the artistic staff, and with Smuin gone he could finally flex his creativity. Under his leadership the SFB devised several unprecedented funding

strategies. Some are innocuous. As a way of helping to finance its new production of the *Nutcracker*, the company sold 500 five-percent subordinated debentures at \$1,000 apiece; a tax attorney was hired full-time, to advise people who want to bequeath their money to the ballet. Others are provocative. Last season a line appeared at the bottom of newspaper advertisements for the company's revival of Smuin's *Romeo and Juliet*—"This ballet underwritten by a gift from The Monterey Vineyard"—along with the vineyard's logo. The SFB's marketing campaign for the *Nutcracker* was underwritten by Yuban Coffee, with Yuban's name on the ballet, in what one SFB staff member called "a product match"—Yuban's gourmet coffee to the ballet's "gourmet demographics."

This practice of so-called secondary advertising, which has been commonplace in popular entertainment, is new to the arts, already widespread, and probably harmless. And yet there is something disturbing about it: the *Lucky Strike Hit Parade* or the *Bell Telephone Hour* never pretended to be anything but blatant commercialism, but events like American Ballet Theatre's "Moët et Chandon Reception" and "Movado Gala," both at the Metropolitan Opera, in New York, in late April, are commercialism cloaked in the robes of philanthropy.

Still other of the SFB's funding strategies are more controversial, with potentially grave ramifications. Last season the SFB launched the "Producers' Portfolio Program," enabling patrons—both businesses and individual donors—to underwrite the ballets of their choice. Of the twenty-four ballets in the repertory, twenty-three were paid for in this way, in full or in part. No one seems willing to address the question of what might happen to a ballet that fails to find an underwriter for two or three seasons in a row. So long as the repertory is well chosen, the administrators insist, things won't ever come to such a pass. They may well be right, since the ballets the SFB performs are safely in keeping with the patrons' tastes.

Probably better than any other company in the country, the SFB has acquired the skills it needs to get ahead in the business world. Its image now is that of a corporation, with Tomasson as its CEO. He obligingly runs the company as if it were a business, setting rehearsal schedules three days in advance, projecting three or five years down the road, and keeping the trustees apprised of his plans. An artistic committee, chaired by Chris Hellman, a former dancer with the London Festival Ballet and a member of the board for the past five years, meets with Tomasson "to discuss how he wants to proceed," she says. "And if he talks about his plans with us, we can put them into lay terms, so that everyone can understand his concept, and then we can get the board's agreement." The artistic committee's best reason for being is presumably to prevent any showdown between Tomasson and the board, so that the board need never say no to its artistic director. Through the committee he can test his ideas before formally presenting them to the board; through the committee the board can head off any ideas it finds extravagant or otherwise not to

its liking. Whether or not the board makes use of them, the channels for subtle coercion are in place. The artistic committee isn't new, but, according to Hellman, it was "inactive under the previous artistic direction."

The prevailing notion of the choreographer as artist, as the consort of the muses (a relatively recent notion, post-Diaghilev), has been replaced in San Francisco by the notion of the choreographer as employee, a skilled laborer with a résumé and a job description. Richard LeBlond said last year, before his retirement: "Helgi Tomasson is a professional—he can do what he does here, or one day he may pack up and leave and do it elsewhere. I am a professional—I can do what I do here or do it elsewhere. But the guys who are always there on a steady basis are the trustees. The ultimate decision-making right rests with them. They hold the charter of the organization; they fly the flag. In that sense, the San Francisco Ballet is the board of trustees."

Smuin was operating on another assumption. Speaking in defense of the choreographer's freedom, he says that the trustees have "the privilege and the honor of serving their organization's creative force" and that they are lucky to get that privilege.

WHAT EVERYONE IN SAN FRANCISCO AGREES ON IN retrospect is that, like the patrons of most regional companies today, they didn't want their ballet to be "provincial." "NEW CHIEF WANTS BALLET TO LEAP TO WORLD-CLASS STATUS," said a headline in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* heralding the arrival last year of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theater's new managing director. In what seem two brazen attempts to evoke a connection to the New York City Ballet, companies in Chicago and Miami chose to call themselves the Chicago City Ballet (it recently folded) and the Miami City Ballet—evidently overlooking the fact that the NYCB needs the "City" because it resides in a state with the same name.

The problem in San Francisco was that people couldn't agree on what "provincial" meant. To Smuin's mind, provincial companies were the ones that hired dancers from the outside rather than from their own schools, that brought in guest artists, that imitated the big companies in New York and imported culture for the edification of local audiences. He instituted a workshop to develop choreographers within the company. The trustees, however, defined Smuin's style as provincial—out of step with the prevailing fashions in New York.

Provincialism by necessity presumes a capital, a center of activity, around which other companies arrange themselves. But since Balanchine's death ballet has been undergoing a steady process of decentralization: New York has lost its claim to artistic supremacy. Coincidentally, the status of ballet in Russia and in Western Europe has collapsed. The Kirov, in Leningrad, clings to some shadow of its former self; the Bolshoi, in Moscow, is no better than the Joffrey; and the Royal Ballet, in London, and the Roy-

al Danish Ballet have become pickled in their own traditions. In deciding to make a bid for international status, the board in San Francisco acted on two assumptions: that provincial ballet still exists in relation to a capital and that there is such a thing as a league of world-class ballet companies. Both are a good ten years out of date.

The SFB trustees wanted something classical. To their minds, Smuin's choreography was not ballet, not *real* ballet, of the sort you find at American Ballet Theatre, a company in which *Les Sylphides* and *La Bayadère* are dutifully preserved, or at the New York City Ballet, in which pure dancing takes precedence over theatrics. "Classical" in the sense in which it's used in San Francisco is essentially a synonym for good taste. (Interestingly, the accusations that Smuin's work was not sufficiently "classical" echo the charges leveled against Balanchine throughout the fifties and sixties, when the Royal Ballet and the Kirov—companies that danced the "classics"—were regarded as classical and the New York City Ballet was considered something apart and, by these standards, something less.) But it is talent that determines the "class" of a company—the extent and size of the talent and the latitude it is allowed. In exchanging Smuin for Tomasson, the trustees in San Francisco essentially traded talent for taste. They recognized in Tomasson a choreographer who would work well within the bounds of their expectations.

Tomasson hired Karin Averty, from the Paris Opera Ballet, as a principal, and several other dancers from abroad; the company roster is now international. He commissioned new ballets from internationally known choreographers—James Kudelka, of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, and William Forsythe. He instituted repertory programming, with a different bill every night, to replace the old system, under which the same program was repeated for several nights running. The SFB is the only American company outside New York to offer a repertory schedule, which places enormous strain on the dancers in a company half the size of the NYCB or ABT.

The board feels vindicated in its decision. Smuin has gone to work where the board thinks his instincts lie—in the theater (directing *Faustus in Hell* at the American Conservatory Theater, in San Francisco; choreographing *Anything Goes* at Lincoln Center, in New York). LeBlond, on a leave of absence from the SFB endowment foundation, is writing a book on arts management. Now that Smuin is gone, a lot of the people who supported the change in artistic directors in San Francisco go out of their way to praise his work, to show that there are no hard feelings. The praise is conspicuously faint. There was, they suggest, something cheap and easy about his success with the public. Tomasson's refined sensibility is seen as an antidote to the lower-middle-brow standards that set in under Smuin.

"I don't know how to say this," Tomasson ventures, "but I would love to be able to educate this audience, to show them ballet of a higher quality, and for them to recognize that." One former board member said after a performance of Tomasson's pristine *Ballet d'Isoline* last season,

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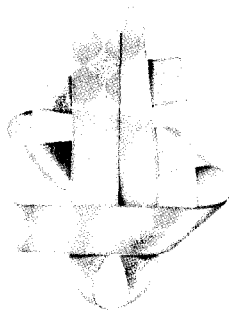
HIND YOU, YOU DON'T TAKE YOUR STEPS LIGHTLY.

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"I know that this is better ballet, that it's better for us as an audience, but I have to admit that I don't come as often as I used to, because I just don't enjoy it as much."

The consensus among the critics is that Tomasson has put the company on the right track, "stripping away its last vestiges of regionalism as he propels it into the arena of a major dance power," as Janice Ross wrote last season in the *San Francisco Tribune*. Anna Kisselgoff's enthusiastic review in *The New York Times* was blown up and displayed like a trophy outside the main entrance to the opera house.

But the approval of *The New York Times* doesn't exonerate the trustees, nor would bad reviews prove that they were wrong to do what they did. The issue is one of principle: does the board of a ballet company have the right to take matters of artistic policy into its own hands? The outcome in San Francisco is probably a good indication of what happens when they do. Ballet becomes only as good as the trustees can imagine it, and the chances are that their imaginations are limited to what exists, to what they've seen. It isn't their fault if they can't envision ballet that hasn't yet been made. This is what artists are for.



Frankfurt

BEFORE IT WAS DESTROYED BY ARSON, LAST NOVEMBER, the Frankfurt Opera, where William Forsythe works, was part of the Städtische Bühnen, the state theater, a monolithic concrete block completed in 1963, facing a park with open stretches of lawn and a few young trees. The Städtische Bühnen housed the ballet, the opera, and the Schauspiel, or dramatic theater, all of which are paid for by the state. During the theater's reconstruction the ballet will perform in the Schauspiel and elsewhere. The opera house will be rebuilt exactly as it was, with 1,300 seats and a vaguely prefab-looking decor, which Forsythe describes as bearing less resemblance to the filigreed opera houses of Europe than to the Minskoff Theatre, on Broadway. Like most of the buildings in Frankfurt, which was razed during the war, the Städtische Bühnen architecturally signifies a fresh start, unencumbered by the past. It is a monument to German cultural vigor, to the conviction that art is a necessity, not a luxury, that a performance of ballet or opera is an everyday occurrence, not a fancy-dress occasion.

The Städtische Bühnen is the Germans' reformist attempt to avoid the pitfalls of state sponsorship as it is practiced elsewhere in Europe—at the Paris Opera, say, or at

La Scala, where the ballet is still seen as the less important partner of the opera and where the artistic machinery is mired in petty bureaucracy. The city of Frankfurt allocates 390 million deutsche marks (about \$230 million) a year for its cultural institutions—more than any other city in Germany. The ballet must pay back to the city an amount equal to 65 percent of the proceeds on a full house, regardless of how many tickets are sold; the money comes out of the box-office income or, if ticket sales are low, out of the company's budget. Tickets for the most expensive seats on an opening night in Frankfurt cost seventy-two marks (about \$42), as compared with 200 marks in Munich. The company makes up some of the money it loses on tickets by selling its tours at a high price.

The Frankfurt Ballet comprises forty dancers, nearly a third of whom are American. They are there for Forsythe, a lean, freckled man with a crew cut, a long face, and an anxious look, whose work is classical (though not, perhaps, in the San Francisco sense of the word) and exploratory, whose manner is paternal and authoritative. His dancers call him Billy. Forsythe was born in New York, raised on Long Island, and trained at the Joffrey Ballet. He moved to Europe in 1973, to dance with the Stuttgart Ballet, where he began choreographing; eventually he went freelance, making ballets for the Paris Opera, the Joffrey, the Vienna State Opera, the Netherlands Dance Theater, and other companies. Four years ago he took over the Frankfurt Ballet.

Forsythe is in Frankfurt for the stage, which is broad, deep, and high, well equipped and unusually adaptable, and for the absolute freedom his position there allows him—freedom he wouldn't have if he were running a company in the States. Martin Steinhoff, the Frankfurt Ballet's managing director, believes it important that the company have a clear artistic strategy, to be determined by Forsythe alone, and that Forsythe be able to work without constraints. Frankfurt has no strong local tradition in ballet, no established repertory of classics—no ballets by Petipa, Bournonville, or Balanchine—nor does it seem to feel the need for one. A so-called museum company, Steinhoff says, one that houses the classics, must be a city's second company. New work takes precedence over old.

Steinhoff is a tall, soft-spoken man, a self-described former "political revolutionary" who now dresses in Italian clothes. He studied painting and graphics, earned a doctorate in philosophy, which he taught for a time at a university, and later worked as a market researcher and a management consultant. He defines his job with the Frankfurt Ballet as one of diplomacy. He has his contacts in the mayor's office. "He hobnobs with all those people," Forsythe says gratefully. He calls Steinhoff his guardian angel. "I'm totally dependent on him," he says, "and he knows it, but he doesn't exercise it." Steinhoff is to Forsythe what Lincoln Kirstein was to Balanchine and what Michael Smuin presumed that Richard LeBlond would be to him: the enabler, a go-between who serves as the interpreter between the artist and the people who control the money.

"Bill and I have an agreement," Steinhoff says, "that he can't tell me what to do and I can't tell him, so we must rely on discussion and persuasion. I give him advice. But in the end it is his decision, and it will be his fight." Forsythe says, "Martin figures out the logistics of the battle. And I listen to him. He said to me, 'You know, we really need a box-office ballet—you don't have to do one, but it would help.' He explained to me why." In response, Forsythe made a mixed program that proved popular with the Frankfurt audience and raised the ballet's ticket sales.

Contributions from the private sector are forbidden. The price that cultural institutions in Germany pay for placing themselves beyond the reach of individuals and corporations is, of course, that they may be vulnerable to changes in the government. Steinhoff insists, however, that the contracts between the theater in Frankfurt and the government are clear, and that if the government wanted to exert its influence, the theater would be in a position legally to protect itself. He and Forsythe are, he says, "perpetual guests," but while their contracts last, their domain is their own, uncontested.

LIKE MOST EXPATRIATES, FORSYTHE CAN CONVENIENTLY alternate between feeling American and feeling European. His tastes are eclectic, encompassing Beethoven and Prince; his skepticism is hard earned. His roots are in the Balanchine repertory (Forsythe's *FrancelDance*, made in 1983 at the Paris Opera and set to Bach's "Art of the Fugue," is a meditation on monuments and the passage of time, with the dancers executing refracted steps and gestures from Balanchine's *Apollo*) and in the German expressionist tradition of Tanztheater (*LDC*, made in 1985 in Frankfurt, is a mammoth full-evening work about the oppression of life within the theater, with spoken—sometimes shouted—text, halogen lights on cords that swing out over the heads of the audience, and grinding stage machinery).

Forsythe has an American's affection and respect for popular culture and a European's admiration for intellectual art. His choreography is often brainy—too brainy for some people's tastes. In *Artifact*, an evening-length ballet made in 1984, the dancing is part of larger proceedings inspired by Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*, by Forsythe's own ideas about architecture and how it conceals (he conceived of the dancing, he says, as landscaping, "like topiary hedges"), and also by his preoccupation at the time with the breakup of his marriage (*Artifact* is, he says, like *Raymonda* seen in rewind, beginning with union and ending in separation)—virtually none of which the audience is able to glean from what happens on stage. But Forsythe's penchant for the cerebral is almost consistently offset by his prodigious gift for inventing movement—by unexpected turns of events that make the audience hang on the dancers' every move, by new variations on classical steps and positions that register with a slight shock of pleasure and the realization that we've never seen *that* before.

This is Forsythe's distinction, and though the sum of the parts of his ballets sometimes seems to be less than it ought to be, there is implicit in all his work—in the movement itself—the promise of greatness that is yet to be realized.

In interviews Forsythe has talked about his notion of classical ballet as a language and about his efforts to extend that language, to analyze it and comment on it in the ballets he choreographs. In his recent free-lance work (*New Sleep*, in San Francisco; *In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated*, for the Paris Opera) he has confined himself to formal concerns, working in the pure-dance genre that other choreographers today inhabit as a matter of course. In his choreography for his own company, however, Forsythe carries on his investigation into the nature of classical dancing, stretching its conventions and testing its limits. Whether or not these efforts have been successful as ballets on their own terms doesn't matter half so much as the fact that Forsythe has had the right to make them. Frankfurt is the arena in which he can freely exercise his mind.

The new work he made there last season, *The Loss of Small Detail*, is a ninety-minute evening inspired, again, by the writings of Foucault. It is typical of the work that Forsythe has done in Frankfurt in that it features spoken text (in this case, in German and in English), gorgeous lighting (which he designed himself), and a score by Tom Willems, a Dutch composer and his frequent collaborator—and also in that the ballet opened to a scandal.

At the premiere the audience was restive but not vocal until, because of a technical problem, the performance had to be interrupted. The curtain came down. The audience rose to its feet and began booing loudly. Forsythe came out onto the apron of the stage to explain the situation and motioned for the people, who by this time were yelling, to quiet down. "We pay our taxes!" they shouted, furious that this was what their money had gone to support. Forsythe summoned Steinhoff out of the wings and left the stage. The perpetrator gone, the audience, having nothing against Steinhoff, grew quiet and sat down. He explained that ordinarily the piece would be performed without an intermission, but suggested that since there was a problem that would take a few minutes to fix, those people who weren't enjoying themselves seize the opportunity to leave (at this there was good-natured laughter), and assured those who were inclined to stay that the end was worth waiting for. More than half the audience filed out; the remainder filed down into the orchestra seats. When the ballet resumed, the audience was quiet and attentive. This time, when the dancers got to lines in the text like "words like boring, really stupid, dumb," there was no sarcastic applause, as there had been before. At the final curtain, however, roughly a third of the remaining audience stood up and booed some more.

The Loss of Small Detail is, in fact, a difficult work, beautiful to look at but confusing and sometimes off-putting. The scene is a museum gallery, with the stage hung entirely in white, a white staircase, and a white floor strewn with

white geometric rubble. The lighting, also white, comes from the flies, as if from a skylight. The stage is patrolled by four men dressed as museum guards and by four women dressed as tour guides, who talk and gesticulate as they walk. At various times the space is filled with dancers in pale gray leotards and tights, executing elaborately organized sequences of movement. Upstage a white backdrop unfurls almost imperceptibly during the course of the performance, revealing, as it lowers, lines of block-lettered text: "PROLIFERATION AND PERFECT DISORDER," "AN EXTREMELY QUIET PARTY," "ALLES IST GENAUSO DANACH," "AN OLD ROOM WITH A SPIDER IN IT." Forsythe says that there are three "foreign languages" in the ballet—German, English, and dancing; that the words are meant to upstage the movement; that what is hypothetically described in the text actually happens in the course of the ballet; that what the characters do reveals the process of the piece. As in the work of certain semiologists, he says, the analysis of the piece takes place in the piece itself.

He talks about "the pleasure of the text," quoting Roland Barthes, but repeatedly, in interviews and in conversation, Forsythe insists that it's not important that audiences grasp his ballets' intellectual underpinnings, the ideas that are what he calls his "tools for composing." What matters is the dancing, he says. The words are, like music, merely a context for the movement. And yet dance is by nature ambiguous and allusive; its meanings are implicit, while words are explicit. An audience that hears words that aren't deliberately absurd but doesn't understand what the words are meant to convey feels as if it's missing out on something, feels cheated or stupid or angry. Forsythe was bewildered that a work as much in earnest as *The Loss of Small Detail* could provoke such a violent response.

The most convenient explanation, and the one that nearly everyone around the Frankfurt Ballet resorts to, is that it's not the ballet but the audience that is to blame. Audiences for opening nights are composed of subscribers, who have bought their series for the sake of the opera (subscriptions include both opera and ballet performances). Nobody connected with the Frankfurt Ballet—not Forsythe, not Steinhoff, not the dancers—seems to know exactly who the people are who come on opening nights, except that they are mostly middle-aged and older, and are evidently conservative in their tastes. These people, it is assumed, are indignant when their ballet is served up in anything but frothy pink tutus. But in addition, German audiences, for reasons that are not entirely clear, seem to relish scandal for its own sake. The premiere of *The Loss of Small Detail* was the second cultural scandal in Frankfurt in two days: the previous night the Schauspiel unveiled its production of *Die Mütter*, causing an uproar. According to Forsythe, however, this ballet scandal was nothing compared with one that had occurred a few months before. That night, too, he had gone before the audience and, in an attempt to mollify them, told them, "It's only

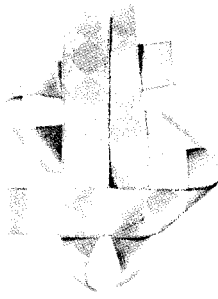
a ballet," at which, he says, they nearly lynched him.

Second-night audiences are better. Then the young people, Forsythe's fans, turn out and cheer the same ballet that was booed the previous night. Once a ballet has opened, the crowd is altogether different, more casually dressed, in clothes that in New York would qualify as "downtown." The second-night audience, determined to drown out the echo of the subscribers' catcalls, is as aggressive in its enthusiasm for Forsythe's work as the first-night audience is in its hatred. It is no wonder, then, that he has come to trust neither.

Forsythe's artistic freedom is in one sense absolute: he doesn't really need an audience—any audience. He seems to value above all the respect of the people he calls his "colleagues," by which he means other dancers and choreographers. He says that he makes ballets for people who are willing to think with him, which means in practice that he makes ballets for himself and that the audience can follow along if it likes. Forsythe makes ballets that he would want to see, and as his own audience he demands a lot of himself—demands a level of musicality and originality that is hard to come by, demands that his ballets stimulate his intellect, demands that they engage his dancers. Ironically, the audience in Frankfurt isn't even fitted to appreciate the movement invention that is Forsythe's strong suit. The kinetic impact of the dancing comes across, but his innovations are lost on balletgoers who don't share his frame of reference: the classical repertory. Unacquainted with what has gone before and unversed in the standard vocabulary, they fail to recognize the ways in which Forsythe is extending and manipulating it.

Forsythe is largely unconcerned with the impression one of his works is making at any given moment, and with how much (or how little) information the audience needs to go on and how that information might best be communicated, and with how to leave certain questions unanswered without frustrating an audience (as Paul Taylor does in *Nightshade*, a riveting series of dimly lit, horrific episodes with no apparent logic, like a dream; as Balanchine does in the last movement of *Serenade*, in which the circumstances surrounding the pas de deux are mysterious). He can afford to be unconcerned. As long as his company continues to serve as a good advertisement for Frankfurt as a city that is open-minded and forward thinking, the mayor is satisfied and willing to overlook any skirmishes that arise at home.

No one would argue that a talented choreographer shouldn't have the license to do the work that is important for his growth as an artist and for the growth of ballet as an art. But the freedom inherent in Forsythe's situation spills over into permissiveness, which in the end undermines the quality of his work. In Frankfurt he has no accountability. There is, finally, an innocence about the ballets he makes there that comes of his being able to indulge himself in ways that few other choreographers are allowed. At times it seems he's talking to himself, in a world of his own devising.



The Balanchine Example

ACCORDING TO SENATOR PAUL SIMON, IN HIS BOOK *The Once and Future Democrats*, in 1981 the government of Austria spent the equivalent of \$100 per citizen per year on the arts (and the city of Vienna an additional \$80 per citizen per year), the United States government seventy cents. The disadvantages of our consumerist approach to the arts—the arts as private enterprise, as an upper-class pastime, as a product for which people will pay—are obvious and serious. But the European system isn't ideal either, and where ballet is concerned, both fall far short of the conditions Balanchine created for himself at the New York City Ballet.

Peter Martins, who has shared the artistic directorship of the NYCB with Jerome Robbins since Balanchine's death, in 1983, says, "Knowing how European opera houses function, and looking at what's happening in America—knowing people on the boards of companies in San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and Houston, and knowing the people who run those companies artistically—I would say that the closest thing to the ideal situation is right here." The NYCB's board, the membership of which has changed considerably over the past six years, is now more active—more sophisticated about ballet and more aggressive when it comes to fund-raising—than it was under Balanchine, but its jurisdiction is no larger. The New York City Ballet *is* the dancers. Along with the responsibilities of his position, Martins says, he inherited Balanchine's relationship to the board, which is there "to provide the company with the funds, private or state, that we need to function." He continues, "The board should be made up of people who have money to give or have the energy and the interest to go out and raise some. But it is understood from the outset that nobody questions, nobody criticizes, nobody approves of what we do—the new people who come in see this immediately. Nobody would even dare to make a suggestion."

It's a common, even hackneyed, assumption that artists are on the whole financially irresponsible, without the skills to function in the real world. There is something wary and patronizing in the San Francisco Ballet board's supervisory attitude, as if, given the chance, an artistic director might run the company into the ground. But most choreographers are pragmatic and put the long-term health of their companies before the project at hand.

"You cannot run a company without a sense of money and what it's worth," Martins says. He and Robbins agree

in advance how much money will go toward producing new ballets, how much toward refurbishing old ballets, how much toward inviting another choreographer as a guest. Their production budget this season amounts to just under a million dollars. "If we were to spend more than that," Martins says, "it would be out of proportion." He and Robbins inform the board of their decisions.

Balanchine, of course, had his board's unanimous respect. He had earned it. Likewise, an artistic director today must earn the respect of his board, but having done that, Martins says, he should be left alone. The formation of an artistic committee, like the one in San Francisco, "would never happen at the New York City Ballet," he says. "If it did, I would be out of here and so, I imagine, would Jerry." If the members of the board are sitting in judgment on his work, as Martins imagines they must be, they have the good grace not to let on. "I'm sure there are people meeting privately over dinner and saying, 'Is this guy any good? Did we get the right guy?'" They don't have to love me. As long as the discussion stays at that level, it's fine." Martins says that he doesn't feel like an employee of the board—though of course he is, technically speaking. "Frankly," he says, "I feel it's the other way around. I know how that sounds, but to put it bluntly, I'm not really here to serve the board." He trusts them enough to know that if he disappoints them or makes a ballet that doesn't meet with their approval, they won't betray him or dismiss him.

PART OF THE DIFFICULTY IN FIGURING OUT WHO ought to pay for ballet today is in figuring out which people ballet is for. Is it for the board of trustees? The choreographer? The dancers? It is not, evidently, for the audience. In Frankfurt the audience is considered untrustworthy and, finally, expendable—classical ballet will forge on ahead without it. In San Francisco the audience is overruled. In both cities ballet is an elitist art form, to be appreciated not by regular folks but by a select few connoisseurs. The audience may disapprove and think that what they're seeing onstage isn't interesting, that it isn't worth their time, but the people running the ballet know better.

Audiences are trained to look at dance by the dance they see. A steady diet of dramatic ballets, like those one sees at the Royal Ballet, makes an audience more sensitive to nuances of acting and gesture; repeated exposure to sensational ballets, like those in the Bolshoi's repertory, leads people to expect pyrotechnics and tricks. Audiences, in short, become specialists in the kind of dancing they are most accustomed to, in the ballets that have formed their idea of what ballet is. Their standard of excellence is only as high as the best ballet they have seen.

The audience at the New York City Ballet while Balanchine was alive was perhaps the best-trained ballet audience in the world, capable of reading classical movement in the abstract, of following a dance phrase in its relation to

the music, of recognizing true invention and seeing through mere novelty. Most of what these people knew about ballet they had learned from watching the repertory Balanchine had made.

Balanchine's relationship with his audience was predicated not on his genius but on his attitude toward them. By the 1970s there had come to be a community of regulars at the New York State Theater—people from all walks of life who knew each other by face if not by name. The repertory was Balanchine's dialogue with these people, and in his ballets he appealed over the heads of the critics directly to the audience. His requirements were few. He asked only that the members of his audience be intelligent, that they like music, and that they like girls. Balanchine had an abiding respect for average people: he recognized their dignity and he believed that classical ballet ought to be accessible to everyone. Though his ballets were often overwhelming on first viewing, they were not impenetrable, and his audience trusted him enough to come back again and again, until the sense of his choreography revealed itself over time. Other choreographers, though their work may not be up to the caliber of his, can nevertheless establish the same sort of relationship, given the same attitude.

But few choreographers today give their audience so much credence or conceive of ballet in such public-spirited terms. For Forsythe, being a choreographer seems to mean being an artist out in the open, following the agenda he has set for his own growth in full view, and he can do this by himself with the help of his dancers. For Tomasson, it means making a stand for the side of the right. Smuin engaged the audience, and some people feel that his ballets, which were more entertaining than they were innovative, illustrate the price a choreographer inevitably pays for ingratiating himself with the audience. If one is going to break new ground, this point of view has it, then one must cultivate the defiant stance of the enfant terrible, as if caring what the audience thinks would in some way water down the strength of one's statement—as if, for instance, Balanchine had made a ballet like *Agon*, full of daring new material, in a vacuum, when in fact the audience embraced it. Balanchine courted fame—not the fashionable kind but genuine popularity. And yet to his mind his ballets belonged to no one but himself. He had the right to change them as he saw fit, whether or not the alterations met with the audience's approval. When in 1979 he lopped off the first movement of *Apollo*, the "birth," and used the music as an overture, the audience was furious; he ignored their protests, and the revision stands.

The audience Balanchine cultivated still exists. For Martins, it came with the New York City Ballet territory, and though some members inevitably feel that the dialogue is not as interesting as it used to be when the season's new ballet was by Balanchine, most are loyal nonetheless and willing to give Martins's choreography the benefit of the doubt. For his part, he respects them. "I made a policy that anybody who writes in and complains about something, we're going to answer them. Every once

in a while, maybe twice a season, there's a letter saying, 'How the hell could you do this?' We write back and tell them why we did whatever it was. I like that, the fact that we're not above our audience. And yet, when all is said and done, we do what we want." As much as the audience appreciates the Balanchine and Robbins repertory, Martins says, they are eager for new things. This month the New York City Ballet is hosting the American Music Festival, offering its audience three weeks of ballets to American music, with twenty-one world premieres by seventeen choreographers, Forsythe among them.

The trustees in San Francisco, most of them business people with an avid interest in ballet, say that in making their decision about what direction the company should take, they relied on what one board member calls "the testimony of experts," some of them critics. Just how much weight the critics' opinions carry with audiences today is open to question, but their influence on the power brokers in San Francisco is clear. Trying to hoist the SFB out of its local context and into the ranks of the big companies, the trustees couldn't afford to rely on their own judgment or, for that matter, the judgment of the audience.

In an article titled "Where Are the New Serious Ballets?," Edwin Denby wrote in 1944 about the "war" between Ballet Theatre (now ABT) and the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo: "Both companies underestimate the intelligence, the sensibility, and the curiosity of the public. . . . One can't win an artistic victory without taking an artistic chance. And without such a special kind of victory no amount of success can counterbalance the decline of prestige. Artistic prestige is ballet's chief economic asset."

Today these same issues inspire heated arguments. Some people contend that all of this is academic, since there are so few choreographers worth bothering about. They say that the board in San Francisco had a point; that if Tomasson can get the SFB dancing better and build a solid repertory, then that should be enough; that artistic freedom there is incidental, since Tomasson is not the sort of choreographer who needs it. Some people argue that Forsythe should impose on himself the rigor that a knowledgeable audience would impose on him, as if he were simply headstrong.

There are those people who consider the conditions in which Balanchine worked too good for anyone else. What Balanchine had was simply what a choreographer—any serious choreographer—requires in order to do his work, and no more than any serious choreographer deserves. His situation was a paradigm, and it is no less applicable now than it was when he was alive and running the company he founded. He taught us that a choreographer needs to be able to take his freedom for granted. But it wasn't the ballets he made that entitled him to his circumstances; it was his circumstances that enabled him to make the ballets he did. He demonstrated that ballet flourishes in relation to its audience, and that the relationship between a ballet company and its community is transacted not at board meetings but in the theater. □



FIRST ENCOUNTERS

IRVING BERLIN AND GEORGE GERSHWIN

THE GREAT WAR WAS OVER, and the whole country seemed addicted to song. Who better to supply the national need than the King of Ragtime, Irving Berlin? "Come on and hear (*boom! boom!*) Come on and hear (*boom! boom!*) Alexander's. . . ." That early hit had sold a million copies in a few months. Now Berlin, back from the Army, stopped by the T. B. Harms Co., in Tin Pan Alley, to show the publisher Max Dreyfus his latest. "That Revolutionary Rag," Dreyfus read, "'Twas made across the sea/ By a tricky slicky/ Bolsheviki. . . ." But the notes were a problem. Berlin's musical education had evolved from a battered piano in a Bowery saloon and remained forever locked in the key of F sharp. He needed someone to take the song down for him. Dreyfus said he had just the man—only a kid really, but showing great promise.

Enter young George Gershwin, glad to oblige. Harms was a big step up from Remick's, where he had pounded a piano in a cubicle up to ten hours a day. He took down

the song, made a lead sheet, and played it back to Berlin with extravagant improvisations that left it almost unrecognizable. Then, abruptly, he asked the composer for a job as his musical secretary. Berlin intimated he might be overqualified. What did he really want to do? Write songs, Gershwin said, tearing up the keyboard with his latest. "What the hell do you want to work for anyone else for?" Berlin asked. "Work for yourself!"

Gershwin took his advice, and within the year there was "Swanee." Then came "Stairway to Paradise." "Rhapsody in Blue" made him as famous—and almost as wealthy—as Berlin. They became friends—two hustlers of Russian-Jewish parentage making it big in America.

Gershwin was twenty that day they met in the Alley. Brash, confident, he seemed just at the beginning of his life, whereas in reality it was more than half over. Berlin, a more cautious thirty, would not have believed his own eventual longevity. Strike up the band, Alexander. Irving Berlin is 100!

—Nancy Caldwell Sorel

*What's good for America's largest firms is
not necessarily good for America. This inversion of an
old dictum captures one of the new economic realities of our time*

CORPORATION AND NATION

BY ROBERT B. REICH

IF THE CORPORATIONS AMERICANS OWN AND WORK FOR succeed, the American economy will too—or so we were brought up to believe. This assumption was given its most brazen expression thirty-five years ago, by Charles Erwin Wilson, who was then the president of General Motors; he was nicknamed “Engine Charlie,” in order to distinguish him from another Charles E. Wilson, “Electric Charlie,” who was the president of General Electric through the 1940s. During the Senate hearing on his confirmation as Eisenhower’s nominee for Secretary of Defense, Wilson was asked whether he could make a decision in the interests of the United States that was adverse to the interests of General Motors’s shareholders. Wilson said that he could, but that such a conflict would probably never arise. “I cannot conceive of one because for years I thought what was good for our country was good for General Motors, and vice versa. The difference did not exist.”

Engine Charlie’s statement was widely criticized at the time as an example of corporate America’s arrogance, but in fact it simply expressed principles already codified in American law and policy: The corporation existed for its shareholders, and as they prospered, so would the nation.

This root principle of our political economy is no longer valid. The corporations Americans own and work for are becoming disconnected from the national economy. The overall success of these corporations has less and less to do with America’s continued growth and prosperity. Corporation and nation are growing apart, and American law and politics must adapt to this new reality.

The Assertive Shareholder

WHEN ENGINE CHARLIE UTTERED his dictum, it was easy to believe that what was good for corporations and their shareholders was also good for the national

economy. At least, shareholders’ interests were not so narrowly defined as to seem inconsistent with the nation’s broader economic objectives. Shareholders were typically too widely dispersed to exert any real control over the corporation. Most shareholders faithfully held on to their shares, treating them as long-term investments, and trusting that share values would continue to rise over time.

Top corporate executives thus enjoyed wide discretion to do whatever they pleased, including what they deemed to be socially responsible, as long as their expenditures could be justified as benefiting shareholders over the long term. This rationalization was capacious enough to encompass almost any activities that might improve the corporation’s image. In fact, some of the expenditures they made—on basic research, the development of new products and technologies, employee training, various educa-

tional and philanthropic activities—had little positive effect on the corporation’s bottom line, because the new knowledge easily spread to other firms. But these activities did help spur broader economic development within the regions the corporations inhabited. And many of the executives relished the role of the “corporate statesman” who mobilized private resources for further public gains.

These activities should not be romanticized. Managerial discretion was not always put to such noble purposes. But it *could* be, and the prevailing ideology held it to be an appropriate exercise of corporate power.

In the past few years, however, the stock market has become far more efficient at keeping the executives’ attention fixed on the bottom line. First, the dispersed individual shareholders of yore have largely been replaced by a relatively few professional investment managers, who are responsible for investing enough billions of dollars of pension funds, mutual funds, and insurance funds to make up at least a third of all the equity in



corporate America. These investment managers are responsible for some 70 percent of the trading on the New York Stock Exchange. They compete against one another, and are quick to shift funds from one corporation to another, depending on whose share prices are rising or falling at the moment. Second, the deregulation of brokerage fees and new technologies linking computers to trading floors have reduced the costs and increased the speed of such transactions; the computer linkages also give investment managers up-to-the-minute data on share prices. Third, financial entrepreneurs have refined techniques for acquiring controlling blocks of shares, sometimes even using the corporation's own assets as collateral. Because of these three developments, it has become relatively easy for an aggressive company or a few audacious individuals to seize control of even the largest of American corporations when they sense a failure by the corporation's executives to exploit some opportunity for increasing the value of their shares.

To deter raiders, every major American corporation is busily "restructuring" itself, to use the Wall Street euphemism. This has required eliminating or drastically cutting back on discretionary spending. No longer are corporations investing in long-term development. Even before last October's crash, research budgets had been slashed. Investments in education and training were down. In 1986 the rate of increase in corporate donations to charity dropped for the first time in fifteen years. "There are very few corporate statesmen anymore," laments James Joseph, the president of the Council on Foundations, which monitors corporate giving. "CEOs no longer want to spend their time on social issues." As one executive put it recently, "It becomes positively un-American to look at anything except their own bottom line."

Executives no longer argue that what is good for shareholders is necessarily good for the nation. In fact, many are now insisting that the stock market's unrelenting demand for higher share value is actually harmful to the nation, and that raiders should be restrained. Their warnings are being heard. In one recent *Business Week*-Harris poll 64 percent of the people surveyed favored new government restrictions on hostile takeovers. States are taking the lead in protecting their corporations. Earlier this year Delaware—where almost half the firms on the New York Stock Exchange are incorporated—became the twenty-ninth state to limit takeovers, thus in one swoop effectively shielding half of corporate America. Congress is considering legislation to discourage hostile mergers nationwide.

What may have escaped notice by America's business leaders is the logical consequence of their new argument. One of the great advantages of the Engine Charlie principle to American business was its implicit rejection of any formal means of holding corporations accountable for the nation's continued prosperity. In benefiting shareholders, the corporation would necessarily spur the economy forward. But once it is granted, even by business leaders, that this is not always the case—indeed, that too much attention to shareholders' demands may in fact detract from the nation's long-term vitality—then the presumptive link between corporate executives' responsibilities to their shareholders and to the nation is severed. What is good for the shareholders is not necessarily good for the nation.

The question that in Engine Charlie's day had been submerged under the vague rubric of "long-term" shareholder interests thus arises: By what means should corporations be held accountable to the public for contributing to the nation's prosperity?

The Foreign Shareholder

AS EVER MORE OF CORPORATE AMERICA IS BOUGHT BY foreign nationals, another divergence appears between the interests of the corporation and its shareholders and the interests of the nation.

In Engine Charlie's time virtually all major corporations doing business in America were owned by Americans. Thirty years later this situation has changed. Other national economies are catching up with that of the United States; a few are on the verge of surpassing it. American-owned corporations are no longer the only global enterprises of significant power and scale, nor even the largest ones. And in a historic reverse, foreign ownership of American capital now stands at over \$200 billion, more than double what it was in 1980, and it is rising rapidly.

The low dollar has made bargains of American corporations, as if corporate America were having a fire sale, with every company marked 35 to 50 percent off its regular price. The companies that have been bought include some sporting familiar names, like Doubleday, CBS Records, Purina Mills, Mack Truck, Allis-Chalmers, and Firestone. Foreign capital is also pouring into the American stock market, last October's crash notwithstanding. Indeed, the tenacity of foreign investors prevented the Dow Jones Industrial Average from falling even further. Major banks and investment



houses—BankAmerica, Shearson Lehman, PaineWebber, and Goldman, Sachs—are now partly owned by Japanese banks intent on breaking into the American financial market.

The wave of foreign acquisition of corporate America is having an effect in the United States similar to that felt in other nations when they faced American investment years ago—when charges of American “imperialism” were in the air and fears that American multinational corporations would exploit host nations were acute. Already a Republican Administration in Washington, which is ideologically committed to free markets, has warned of the dangers of allowing foreigners to take over economically “strategic” American corporations. Meanwhile, would-be foreign buyers are coming under increasing scrutiny. A new trade bill recently passed by the House of Representatives would require foreign investors to report to the government any “significant” interest they had acquired in an American corporation. The version passed in the Senate would authorize the Administration to review any proposed acquisition of an American corporation by foreigners. American business leaders, although delighted to have foreign investors bid up the prices of their own shares, have expressed mounting concern about the number of foreign-owned corporations popping up in their midst.

Here, too, the implication is that the interests of the shareholders of the corporations in our midst are no longer the same as the nation’s. In this instance, it is not enough that a corporation produces goods and services within the United States and employs American workers. To guarantee that corporate success will translate into national success, the corporation must also be firmly under the control of American citizens—so the argument goes. American shareholders and executives, it is assumed, can be trusted to act in the nation’s interest under circumstances in which foreign shareholders and executives cannot be trusted. But a step is missing from this argument, just as a step was missing from the previous argument, that corporations protected from takeovers will act in the long-term interest of the economy. Here the unanswered question is, Why and under what circumstances should American citizens be expected to forgo profits in pursuit of national goals?

The Cosmopolitan Shareholder

IN ENGINE CHARLIE’S TIME ALMOST everything that American-owned corporations sold here or abroad—particularly anything involving the slightest complexity in design or manufacturing—was produced in the United States. This is no longer the case. American-owned corporations

are now doing all sorts of technologically sophisticated work outside the United States. A significant proportion of America’s current trade imbalance is due to this tendency.

Look closely at almost any major American corporation that sells complex gadgets and you are likely to see a foreign producer in disguise: in 1986 IBM imported \$1.5 billion worth of data-processing equipment and General Electric half a billion dollars’ worth of cassette recorders, microwave ovens, room air-conditioners, and telephones. Apple Computer’s Asian plants make all Apple II computers, which in 1986 accounted for more than half of the company’s sales. Eastman Kodak now sells, under its own name, Canon photocopiers, Matsushita video cameras, and TDK video tape, and it has farmed out the production of its 35-millimeter cameras to Haking Industries, in Hong Kong, and Chinon Industries, in Japan. And so on.

All such goods that American corporations buy or make abroad and then sell in the United States are counted as American imports. The current frenzy in Washington over allegedly unfair foreign trade practices has obscured this reality. Consider Taiwan, which now exports some \$19 billion more to the United States each year than it imports from the United States. The imbalance has provoked the indignation of American politicians, some of whom are demanding that Taiwan take steps to improve the balance or incur stiff penalties. But on closer examination the real culprit emerges. Several of Taiwan’s top exporters are American-owned corporations—RCA, Texas Instruments, and General Instruments. All told, more than 30 percent of Taiwan’s trade imbalance with the United States, and more than half of its imbalance in high-technology goods, is attributable to American-owned corporations’ buying or making things in Taiwan and exporting them back to the United States. Taiwan’s only sin is to have a highly skilled population that is willing to work for relatively low wages (Taiwanese engineers earn a quarter of the salary of American engineers, and Taiwanese technicians a fifth of their American counterparts’ wages).

Even Japan’s notorious trade surplus with the United States is in substantial part the handiwork of American-owned corporations. Fully \$17 billion, or about 40 percent, of Japan’s \$39.5 billion trade surplus with the United States in 1985 (the last year for which such data are available) was the result of American corporations’ buying or making things in Japan to be sold in the United States under their own brand names. One of the ironies of our age is that an American who buys a Ford automobile or an RCA television is likely to get *less* American workmanship than if he had bought a Honda or a Matsushita TV.

Americans who live and work in the



United States continue to consume more than they produce and to import more than they export—hardly the path to prosperity. But American-owned corporations are doing quite well, regardless. They are not only raking in nice profits by buying or making things abroad for sale here but also doing well by buying or making things abroad for sale everywhere else. In 1985 American-owned corporations sold the Japanese over \$53 billion worth of goods that they made in Japan—a sum greater than the American trade deficit with Japan that year (Japanese companies, meanwhile, sold us only \$15 billion worth of goods that they made in the United States). IBM Japan is huge and prosperous in its own right, with 18,000 employees, annual sales of \$6 billion around the world, and research and production facilities that are among the most advanced anywhere.

In fact, American-owned corporations have remained competitive worldwide. A recent study by Robert Lipsey and Irving Kravis, of the National Bureau of Economic Research, suggests that while the fraction of world markets held by U.S. corporations exporting from the United States has steadily dropped during the past twenty-five years, such losses have been offset by the gains of American-owned corporations exporting from other nations.

One conclusion that might be drawn from all this is that America's competitive decline does not stem from any inherent deficiency in the top management of American corporations. The stream of books exhorting managers toward excellence notwithstanding, American managers have done well by their shareholders (although *not* so well by America). Unsurprisingly, this insight has been welcomed by American business leaders eager to shift the blame for our competitive woes onto someone else. Mobil Oil Corporation made the argument succinctly in a recent pronouncement:

American multinational companies can, and do, compete successfully all over the world. While the U.S. trade balance became a shambles, these companies continued to operate successfully in world markets. They did so by producing in those countries with the best business climates. . . .

So to argue that American businessmen have lost their management and technological skills, or grown fat and lazy, is neither true nor relevant. We should be looking to ourselves to learn why this country has provided a less favorable business environment than some of our trading partners. And then we should act to improve the climate.

Stripped to its brutal essentials, Mobil's message is this: American corporations and their shareholders can now prosper by going wherever on the globe the costs of doing business are lowest—where wages, regulations, and taxes are minimal. Indeed, managers have a responsibility to their shareholders to seek out just such business climates. If America as a whole wants to be a successful exporter, it must compete with other nations to be the location where American corporations find it profitable to set up shop.

This lesson is well understood by state governments. Consider, for example, the Hyster Company, an American-owned corporation that makes forklift trucks used to shuttle things around factories and warehouses. In 1982 Hyster informed public officials in five states and four nations where it built trucks that some Hyster plants would close. Operations would be retained wherever they were most generously subsidized. The bidding was ferocious. Within six months Hyster had collected \$72.5 million in direct aid. Britain is reported to have offered \$20 million to ransom 1,500 jobs in Irvine, Scotland. Several American towns—including Kewanee, Illinois; Sulligent, Alabama; and Berea, Kentucky—surrendered a total of \$18 million in direct grants and subsidized loans to attract or preserve around 2,000 jobs.

The same underlying problem emerges. Subsidies and tax breaks are offered with no strings attached—no means of holding corporations accountable to the public. Executives of the Hyster Corporation are under no more legal obligation to direct corporate efforts toward spurring the American economy than are the executives of companies shielded from takeovers by recent state laws such as those passed by Delaware, or than are the executives of American-owned corporations in general. Hyster can take the subsidies and tax breaks and do with them whatever it wants. Indeed, just last August, Hyster announced another wave of closings. The Engine Charlie principle, as this example illustrates, is no longer valid, but nothing has replaced it to re-establish the link between corporation and nation.

Beyond Engine Charlie

THE PRIVILEGED PLACE OF THE corporation in America has been justified for more than a century by the assumption that corporations automatically fuel the nation's economic growth—that what is good for shareholders is necessarily good for



America. In the past few years, however, as corporate America has become simultaneously more attentive to the immediate demands of shareholders for high returns and more international in its ownership and operations, its links to the national economy have seriously weakened.

How *should* the corporation be bound to the nation in the future? Should it be bound at all? The struggle to define a new relationship between corporation and nation will be one of the central economic and political tasks of our era, and it will defy easy solutions. Only the contours of the emerging debate can be seen.

On the one side will be those who argue that any divergence between corporate strategies and national goals is perfectly okay. The world economy as a whole will be stronger if corporations are free to attract investors from anywhere and undertake production anywhere, with the sole objective of rewarding their shareholders with the highest possible returns. In this view, any special relationship between particular corporations and a particular nation will result in an inefficient use of resources overall. As the world economy grows ever more integrated, the nation-state is becoming outmoded and irrelevant anyway. A nation's only legitimate concern with corporations doing business within its borders should be to guard its citizens from harmful side effects of corporate activity, such as pollution, unsafe products, monopolization, and fraud.

But this view fails to take into account the positive side effects of corporate activity for a nation—in particular, the training of a nation's work force in new skills applicable outside the company, and technological discoveries with broader potential. Such corporate investments in the skills and knowledge of a nation do not necessarily benefit shareholders, as has been noted, because the benefits often leak out of the company as the new knowledge spreads and as employees take their skills elsewhere. But they are critical for moving an economy forward. Positive side effects like these are as relevant to the welfare of a nation's citizens as are the potential harmful side effects. In a world in which nation-states continuously compete for economic power and the influence that flows from it, decisions about where investments are undertaken, by whom, and of what sort, can have profound political consequences as well.

On the other side of the debate will be those who argue that corporations should be tightly bound to the nation. In this view, large corporations in particular should be firmly under public control. It will be urged, for example, that representatives of the public be placed on corporate boards; that some corporate shares be held by publicly appointed trustees or by public authorities; that American corporate investments in other nations, and foreign investments here, be reviewed to ensure compatibility with national economic goals; and that transfers of American capital

or technology across the border be carefully monitored.

But this view suffers from the opposite infirmity—it sacrifices market efficiency for public accountability. Without the hope of maximizing profits, the spur of competition, and the fear of loss, enterprises have a tendency to stagnate. Too much of this, and entire economies can decline. There is a growing consensus, now apparently extending all the way to the Kremlin, that public ownership and centralized controls are not the path to progress either.

Recent efforts in the United States to deter hostile corporate takeovers, limit foreign ownership of corporations, and improve the business climate through indiscriminate tax breaks and subsidies represent the worst of both worlds—less efficiency and less accountability to the public. On the one hand, these initiatives can be costly: the regulation of takeovers may simply give job security to incompetent managers, limits on foreign ownership may only worsen our balance of payments, and tax breaks and subsidies thrown willy-nilly in the direction of corporations may induce them to do things they could do better and more cheaply elsewhere.

On the other hand, these initiatives offer no assurance that the corporations that benefit from them will in turn help the broader economy. Indeed, they leave corporate executives free to do whatever they wish with the protections, tax breaks, and subsidies they receive. These measures are predicated on a blind trust that corporate executives shielded from takeovers will invest in the economy's long-term development, that American executives and shareholders will make sacrifices for the nation which foreign executives and shareholders will not, and that tax breaks and subsidies will automatically induce corporations to produce the kinds of goods in America that will strengthen the overall economy.

The best solution would be to focus specifically on what things we want corporations to do that are apt to be unprofitable to shareholders, and then to induce corporations to do them. What is it we want corporations to do? Not to preserve jobs in the United States that can be done far more cheaply by foreign workers eager to do them. The costs of trying to keep such jobs here—as reflected in higher prices for consumers and onerous burdens on Third World workers deprived of work—would far exceed the benefits.

We should ask corporations instead to help propel the American economy forward by training American workers in new skills and investing in new knowledge. America's economic future depends not on the old jobs we used to do but on the new contributions we can make to an increasingly integrated world economy.

Our overriding goal should be to ensure that America is a place where enterprises of whatever nationality perform sophisticated tasks, and thus give large numbers of Americans valuable



experience. There are several ways of inducing corporations to undertake complex production in America. The first and most obvious is to ensure that our citizens are capable of learning quickly on the job, so that Americans will be the kind of workers global corporations *want* to train. This will require that we as a nation invest more than we do now in education—in pre-school programs, in basic literacy and numeracy, in scientific and technical competence, and in foreign-language training, to name only the most critical areas. Numerous recent studies reveal the ignorance of American schoolchildren relative to those in Japan and other industrialized nations, and the extent of illiteracy and innumeracy in the society. In the past five years there has been much hand-wringing over reading and math scores in certain locales, and even some progress in raising them. The important point is that America's future productivity is directly related to our collective capacity to learn on the job, which depends in turn on how well we are prepared to learn. No corporation, however well intentioned, can afford to make up for a lack of basic education.

In addition to the general lure of a competent work force, however, we will need more-substantive inducements. They could take several forms. We might, for example, subsidize corporations that do certain kinds of advanced design and manufacturing in the United States, with the amount of the subsidy depending upon the numbers of employees so engaged. Or the inducement might take the form of a tax credit, similarly structured. Or it might be a "domestic content" rule, requiring that the highest-valued steps in the production of certain goods sold here be undertaken in America.

Inducements like these would also be costly, resulting in higher taxes or prices for most Americans. But unlike the open-ended initiatives now commonplace, these inducements would feature a quid pro quo: corporations receiving them would be delivering benefits to the American economy, through on-the-job training and new knowledge. And the greater the benefits to the economy, the greater the inducements to the corporation.

These inducements would not hobble international trade or shelter American corporations from competition. They would be made available to

any corporation—headquartered anywhere, owned by anyone. Corporations would thus be held accountable for what we as a public sought from them, yet would have a continued incentive to allocate resources to their most profitable uses. Such inducements would have the additional virtue of pushing us to clarify our long-term development strategy—forcing our government representatives to define the categories of experience and skills we think will be most important to the nation's future.

The difficulties in the way of administering such inducements, or even gaining sufficient political support to launch them, should not be underestimated. It has been hard enough to strengthen public education and ensure a minimal

level of competence in the American work force; this program of on-the-job training and research is far more ambitious. Moreover, many Americans lack confidence in government's capacity to accomplish public purposes wisely and efficiently, and already feel overwhelmed and overtaxed by public needs.

But the alternatives are even less attractive. Our national strategy for economic development clearly must be more than, and different from, the sum of the strategies used by the corporations our citizens own or work for. To repeat: this is not because these corporations are irresponsible or unpatriotic but because their widening global opportunities for making profits—and shareholders' mounting demands that they exploit such opportunities—are coming to have no direct or unique bearing on the nation's continued growth. The direction in which we are heading—blocking takeovers, hobbling foreign owners, and granting tax breaks and subsidies indiscriminately—seems far riskier and costlier than the direction I have proposed.

The growing divergence between corporation and nation is part of a larger quandary. As our economy becomes so entwined with the world's that the nation's borders lose their commercial significance, Americans need to understand and recognize the subtle ways in which our citizens are connected to one another—not through the corporations we own but through the skills and knowledge we absorb. Without this understanding we cannot expect to elicit the sacrifices required to gain greater skills and knowledge. Corporations are no longer the building blocks of the U.S. economy; our citizens are. □



Q: Why can't this veal calf walk?



A: He has only two feet.

Actually, less than two feet. Twenty two inches to be exact. His entire life is spent chained in a wooden box measuring only 22 inches wide and 56 inches long. The box is so small that the calf can't walk or even turn around.

Most people think animal abuse is illegal. It isn't. In veal factories, it's business as usual. "Milk-fed" veal is obtained by making a calf anemic. The calf is *not* fed mother's milk. He's fed an antibiotic laced formula that causes severe diarrhea. He must lie in his own excrement — choking on the ammonia gases. He's chained in a darkened building with hundreds of other baby calves suffering the same fate. They are immobilized, sick, and anemic.



Toxic Veal

The reckless use of oxytetracycline, mold inhibiting chemicals, chloramphenicol, neomycin, penicillin, and other drugs is not just bad for calves. It is toxic to you.

Chloramphenicol has caused fatal bone marrow disease in people, but illicit use in factory farm animals continues.

Antibiotics in veal and other factory farm products create virulent strains of bacteria that wreak havoc on human health. *Salmonella* poisoning is reaching epidemic proportions.

Veal factories maximize profits for agribusiness drug companies because they are a breeding ground for disease. To keep calves alive under such torturous conditions, they are *continually* given drugs which are passed on to consumers.

It doesn't have to be this way. And with your help, it won't be. Please, don't buy veal!

Campaign Against Factory Farming

YES! Factory farms must be stopped from misusing drugs, abusing farm animals, and destroying America's family farms. Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of:

☐ \$20 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$500 ☐ Other _____

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A free Consumer Alert pack is available upon request.

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HEALTH

FIRST, DO NO HARM

Lack of understanding often results in the misprescription of drugs

BY ELLEN RUPPEL SHELL

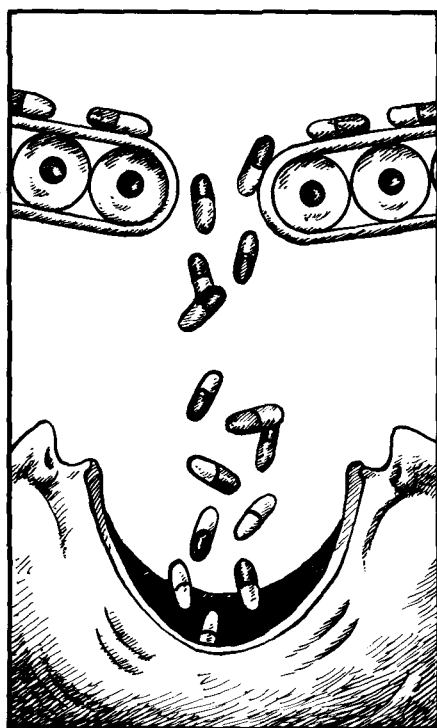
NOT LONG AGO, more prescriptions for amphetamine were filled in Michigan than in any other state. The reason for this was not clear, but there was informed speculation that assembly-line workers in the automobile industry were probably involved. Assembly-line work is boring, and uppers are known to make time pass quickly. The pusher in many cases was a certain doctor, whose practice was limited to distributing amphetamine in large quantities to anyone who asked for it. People lined up at his door every morning, and the line was said to stretch around the block. These people were weighed and had their blood pressure taken by a nurse, and were then ushered in, seven or eight at a time, to see the doctor. He told them they were looking fine and gave them each a large packet of pills. Some "patients" went through this ritual daily.

The Michigan doctor, who has since been arrested and is no longer licensed to practice, is said to have distributed more than a million doses of amphetamine a year. His is an extreme example of a problem that the medical profession has been quietly monitoring, and dealing with, for more than a decade. The federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) estimates that about 17,000 of the nation's 650,000 doctors and a fraction of the 50,000 pharmacies dole out prescription drugs purely for financial gain, a clearly illegal practice. But the vast majority of what is called inappropriate prescribing does not involve these unscrupulous "scrip doctors." Hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of unnecessary and even irrational prescriptions are written every year by doctors acting in a perfectly legal capacity.

Inappropriate prescription-writing is the most common complaint heard by medical review boards, in some states eclipsing all other complaints combined. "We have found doctors prescribing fifteen drugs, five of which were contraindicated," says John Ulwelling, the executive director of the Oregon Board of

Medical Examiners. "There's no doubt that this is the number-one problem facing medical boards across the country."

Of all drug-related emergency-room cases, more than half involve drugs that were legally prescribed. Of all drug-related deaths, 70 percent involve prescription drugs (the percentage of deliberate overdoses is unknown). Although the American Medical Association makes a point of loudly condemning the handful of crooked doctors who write thousands of illegal prescriptions for narcotics and other psychoactive drugs, the crux of the problem lies with honest doctors who simply do not know—or, in some cases, care—that the medication they are recommending for a patient is ineffective, needlessly expensive, or dangerous. "The average American doctor is simply writing too many prescriptions," says Dr. Jerry Avorn, an internist and an associate professor at Harvard Medical School. "And, surprisingly, most of the problem is with non-narcotic drugs."



A classic example, Avorn says, is propoxyphene, a prescription analgesic most commonly known by one of its brand names, Darvon. Propoxyphene is widely prescribed to alleviate mild to moderate pain, yet controlled studies show it to be at best no more effective a pain reliever than aspirin or acetaminophen (Tylenol). The DEA does not consider propoxyphene a particularly dangerous drug, and for that reason many physicians consider it to be relatively benign. But propoxyphene has a number of unpleasant side effects, including dizziness, drowsiness, nausea, and vomiting, and can be dangerous when combined with alcohol. It is also addictive. In a study completed in 1983, overdoses of the drug were blamed for roughly a thousand deaths a year, only about half of which were suicides. Yet doctors continue to prescribe it: Darvocet, a mixture of propoxyphene and another analgesic, is one of the most commonly prescribed drugs in the country.

Ironically, the main reason propoxyphene is sometimes preferred to aspirin is that it is available only by prescription. There is a strong belief among physicians that patients have faith in prescription drugs and will perceive themselves to be better served if they obtain a prescription during an office visit. The placebo effect of prescription drugs is thought to be greater than that of over-the-counter drugs, and this effect is sometimes considered critical in the treatment of things like arthritis, headache, and chronic back pain, which are extremely difficult to treat.

"Some patients won't patronize a doctor unless he prescribes drugs," says Dr. Lial Kofoed, of the Department of Psychiatry at Dartmouth Medical School, in Hanover, New Hampshire. "They feel ripped off if all they get is a talking-to. If you go to dinner with doctors in a big city, you'll hear them complain about competition. They don't want to lose a patient to the doctor who will give out a prescription for the latest drug."

Newer drugs may be perceived as better or safer than older drugs, because they haven't been around long enough for their limitations to show. For example, in the seventies and early eighties doctors widely prescribed Valium (diazepam) for anxiety and tension. Dubbed "mother's little helper" (after a song by the Rolling Stones), the drug was so popular that, doctors reported, patients asked for it by name. But Valium's popularity waned as it became associated

with middle-class malaise and as its addictive properties became widely recognized. According to Kofoed, Xanax (alprazolam) is gradually supplanting Valium as the drug of choice for anxiety (Pharmaceutical Data Services reports that Xanax was the fourth most dispensed brand-name drug in 1987). Part of the reason for the change is probably that the patent on the formula for Valium is about to expire, and so Valium is not being heavily advertised in medical journals, whereas Xanax is.

There is now some concern, however, that Xanax is even more addictive than Valium. "One of the best ways to make a temporary problem permanent is to addict a patient to a drug," Kofoed says. "In the case of Valium or Xanax, you get the original anxiety supplemented by withdrawal anxiety"—that is, people are afraid to give up the drug for fear that if they do, their original symptoms will return.

Doctors in large practices prescribe more drugs per patient than do doctors in smaller practices. Writing a prescription has in many cases become a tacit way of indicating that the appointment is over—and the sooner the prescription is written, the sooner the doctor can get on to the next case. "It takes a lot less time to prescribe a drug than to explain to a patient why you won't," Kofoed says. "Also, most doctors want to maintain the image of helper, and some doctors will do almost anything to keep up that image. So they prescribe a pain-killer or a tranquilizer, and the patient is happy."

THIS COMPULSION to please patients at almost any cost is made more dangerous by the fact that many doctors don't know all that much about drugs in the first place. Physicians receive surprisingly little formal training about prescription drugs in medical school. They are expected to learn most of what they need to know during their internship and residency and, later, in medical journals and occasional courses. In reality, however, doctors get the vast majority of their information about new drugs from pharmaceutical sales representatives, known in the industry as detail men, or detailers. Detail men meet with doctors in their offices. They offer free samples, to tide patients over until a prescription is filled. As salesmen, the detailers try to promote the latest and most profitable drugs for their companies, not to give the doctor a balanced presentation. At any rate, many salesmen are incapable

of giving one, because they lack the facts to do so. Although a few companies, like Eli Lilly, strive to hire pharmacists to fill their sales slots, most do not. Of 27,000 detailers in the industry, only 4,000 hold degrees in pharmacy. According to T. Donald Rucker, a health economist and a professor of pharmacy administration at the University of Illinois at Chicago, most detailers are not scientifically trained.

"When hiring a salesman, some companies figure they're better off with an English or music major than with a pharmacist," Rucker says. "If you are trying to bamboozle a physician into thinking a certain drug is the greatest thing since sliced bread, it helps if you don't know anything about the product beyond what your boss has told you. Besides, pharmacists are in demand, and they are expensive—maybe five or ten thousand more a year than a liberal-arts major."

Detailing is an expensive process. A study published last November concluded that drug companies spend an average of \$81 for every face-to-face encounter between one of their salesmen and a physician. Yet it appears that this approach is cost-effective—every major drug company in the country uses it. In 1977 a vice-president of marketing for a major drug manufacturer told a reporter for *Sales Marketing and Management* magazine, "Dealing with physicians is the best way to sell drugs. . . . All I can say is that every time we've added salespeople, sales have gone up." It is safe to assume that the number of sick people does not correlate with the number of drug salespeople on the road—more drugs are sold because more physicians have been advised to prescribe them.

Jerry Avorn and his colleague, Stephen B. Soumerai, who has a doctorate in public health, ran a controlled study to see whether doctors' prescribing practices would change if they were provided with unbiased information about particular drugs. In an effort they called academic detailing, they enlisted clinical pharmacists to make office visits and explain the action and limitations of three drugs that are widely considered to be overprescribed: vasodilators, which are prescribed inappropriately for the treatment of senility; cephalixin, an antibiotic that, while effective, is much more expensive than equally effective alternative drugs; and propoxyphene. After spending just over half an hour with a pharmacist, physicians reduced their prescription of these drugs by an

average of 13 percent, relative to a control group. Avorn believes that such an outreach program, widely expanded, could reduce the \$2.8 billion worth of prescriptions that physicians write each year, and thereby save millions of dollars and many lives. "Nobody's minding the store in academic medicine to systematically inform doctors about drugs," Avorn says. "Industry is very good at this—it does continuing education and marketing that reaches just about every doctor in the country. The bad news is that industry's message is a commercial message. Clearly, industry is not to blame—it's the doctor's fault if this is the only message he listens to, and it is the patient, and society, who is hurt."

ELDERLY PATIENTS are at particularly high risk of being inappropriately medicated. Ordinarily, the liver or kidneys will clear the body of excess drugs, but in the elderly the efficiency of these organs lessens and some drugs can build up to toxic levels. On average, people over age sixty-five take twice as many pills as the rest of us (nursing-home patients typically receive from four to a dozen every day, half of them tranquilizers). Often elderly people go to several physicians, each of whom may prescribe one or more drugs without knowing what drugs the other doctors are prescribing or what over-the-counter medications the patient is taking. Hence the risk of dangerous drug interactions is greatly increased. Side effects of over-medication are particularly hard to detect in older people, because they include the very symptoms associated with "normal" old age: incontinence, tremors, loss of facial expression, depression, agitation, confusion, and falls. Often elderly patients are given a long-lasting drug for a short-term problem, such as occasional sleeplessness, which may linger in their systems for up to three days. The result may be permanent listlessness and what look like symptoms of depression—symptoms that may prompt the prescription of an antidepressant.

"The problem is that most of us went into medicine because we wanted to help and because we enjoyed science," Avorn says. "Chemical intervention seems to be a scientific way to help people. Drugs represent one of the most effective technologies for ameliorating disease—but they don't always work. You can't fix senility with a pill. Prescription medications are not a substitute for compassion—or common sense." □

TRAVEL

TOWARD APPOMATTOX

In the footsteps of Grant and Lee

BY JACK BEATTY

"VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS" is the motto of the state tourist board of Virginia, but New Jersey can as plausibly make that boast. Virginia's comparative advantage in tourism is not libidinal but historical. Among its thousands of historical sites are some famous battlefields of the Civil War—among them the battlefields of the last great campaign ever fought in the United States. That campaign opened in May of 1864, when Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the Potomac crossed the Rapidan River, twenty miles west of Fredericksburg, to seek out Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia; it closed with Lee's surrender at Appomattox, a hundred and fifty miles to the southwest, one month short of a year later. Curious to know what races of that epic contention have survived, my family and I recently traveled he route of the last campaign.

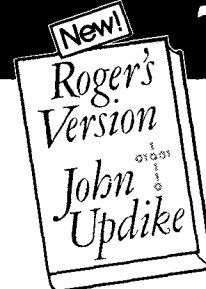
Grant was small and slight and famously unprepossessing. At forty-one he was a taciturn yet passionate man, who, just a few years before the war began, had been reduced to selling wood in a St. Louis street corner. The war was a big chance; an ordinary man rising to the occasion of his life, he made the most of it, becoming on the strength of his victories at Fort Donelson and Vicksburg the general-in-chief of all the Union armies. Lee, in Grant's own words, was "six feet high and of faultless form," aristocratic where Grant was plebeian, successful where Grant, in everything but war, had been a failure. At fifty-seven Lee was already suffering from the heart condition that would kill him six years later (his last words would be "Strike the tent"). Grant would live twenty-one more years, dying in agony from cancer of the throat, but not before he had secured his family's future by finishing his last campaign, the writing of his two-volume *Memoirs*. Grant and Lee met three times: once in 1847, during the war against Mexico, once at Appomattox, and once at the White House, when Grant was President.

Grant was new to the Virginia theater of the war in 1864, and he brought with him a new idea of how to fight there. The Union commanders before him—McDowell, McClellan, Pope, Burnside, Hooker, Meade—had tried to capture Richmond; he would try to destroy Lee's army. Lee, outnumbered (61,953 men to Grant's 122,146), sought not to destroy Grant's army but to punish it so badly that the northern public, three years into our most horrific war, would vote President Abraham Lincoln out of office in November in favor of a Peace Democrat, who would call a halt to Grant's offensive (and Sherman's matching drive in Georgia) if Lee had not already stopped it himself.

The first battle of the campaign came just a few miles southeast of the Germanna Ford of the Rapidan, in a thickly wooded district called the Wilderness. Ending the winter's long "mud truce" between the armies, Grant crossed the Rapidan on May 4; Lee attacked on the fifth. The ensuing battle lasted two days. It was fought in dense woods, for the most part, and was, in the words of one veteran, "simply bushwhacking on a grand scale." The gunfire ignited the trees, and wounded men caught between the lines were burned to death, their shrieks carrying back to unnerve their comrades. Grant went to pieces at one point—retired to his tent to have a good cry—and Lee's ablest general, James Longstreet, was seriously wounded by his own men. Lee himself barely escaped a bullet when he tried to lead a charge. "Lee to the rear! Go back, General Lee, go back!" a company of Texans pleaded with him. He agreed to retire if they would make a seemingly impossible attack. They did, and it worked. His men loved Robert E. Lee, and he regularly put their love to the test by asking them to die for him.

I visited the meadow where Lee used love to make war; I inspected the vestigial earthworks, read all the signs, and plunged into the eponymous wilder-

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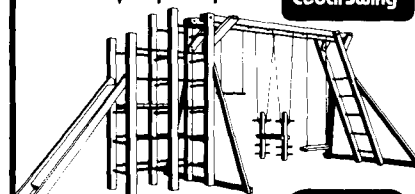
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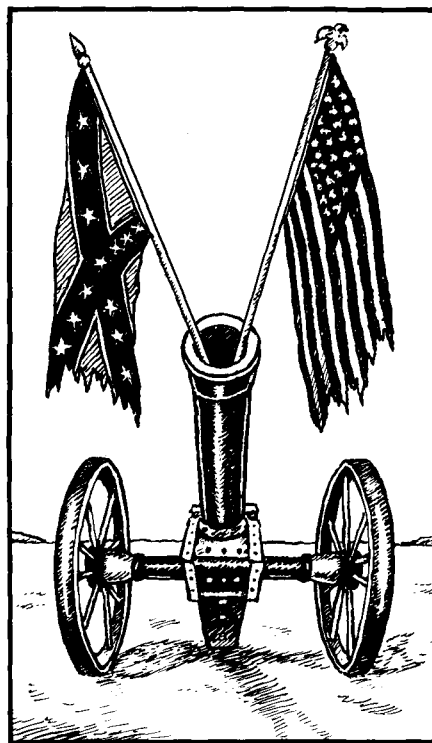
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ness. All of this is part of the Wilderness Battlefield, just off Route 3, a twenty-minute drive from Fredericksburg. I wish I had planned a family picnic in one of the bosky dells set apart for that purpose on the mossy shoulder of the park road; equipped with charcoal braziers and picnic tables, they looked inviting.

The battle ended in a stalemate, with neither side able to break the other's entrenched line. Yet for all its futility, the Wilderness decided something. The veteran soldiers of the Army of the Potomac expected that Grant would do what all their generals had done after tangling with Lee—scoot back over the nearest river. But retreat was not in Grant's nature. South, deeper into Rebel territory, was where he aimed to go. When the first columns of troops reached a crossroads in the middle of the Wilderness and their officers ordered them to march south, the men cheered. Grant had given them back their self-respect. It was a turning point in the Civil War.

Lee, moving on longer lines, turned south too; and when Grant neared the crossroads town of Spotsylvania Court House, twelve miles beyond the Wilderness, Lee was there, blocking his path. From May 8 to 20 Grant assaulted Lee's trenches in attack after attack. The result was inhuman slaughter. Battered, bled, Grant finally gave it up, moving off to his left, always heading south.

I toured the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield with a U.S. park ranger and historian, Wilson Greene. If you rent a tape at the Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center, which is manned year-round (as the Wilderness and Spotsylvania are not), you can hear some of the story that Greene told me: about how the Confederates got there first only by the kind of accident Tolstoy would have relished, about how the terrain shaped their lines into a muleshoe, and about how the Federals stormed the top of this muleshoe, making it in twenty hours of hand-to-hand combat the "Bloody Angle." Today the Bloody Angle is a swale of ground at the edge of a lush meadow. With the sun pelting down, birdsong chorusing from the woods, and a curtain of mist rising off the grass, violence seemed unimaginable in this place. When I mentioned this obvious irony to Greene, he told me about another form of violence being perpetrated here and elsewhere in Virginia: the despoiling of battle sites in the National Parks by Civil War-memento hunt-



ers, searching, illegally, for belt buckles and other booty. What's more, and worse because legal, development is pressing hard against the battlefields. "This is the fastest growing area of Virginia," Greene told me, "and a new civil war is now going on between the forces of development and those of preservation."

Greene took me to a nearby Confederate cemetery to dramatize the threat. It was a small enclosure, Sunday-morning quiet, and the high grass lapping at the names of the Carolinians and Mississippians on the headstones made me feel as if I had stepped into the past. I did not try it with my six-year-old, but you could bring a twelve-year-old here and from the rusting gate, the canted gravestones, the genteel decay all around, he would sense the venerable emanations, the romance of the Lost Cause, "one of the worst for which a people ever fought," in Grant's words, but one dignified somehow, exalted, by the sacrifices made in its behalf. "See that clump of trees over there?" Greene said, breaking my reverie. The trees adjoined the cemetery, and right there, he said, a developer wanted to put up condominiums. Greene said he realized there were two sides to the thing: people had to have a place to live. Still, this was a palpable wrong: "It will defile what these brave men did here." And it will break the spell of the past forever.

Since the federal government is now all but out of the business of buying up

land for federal parks, Greene and some of his historian friends have started a private foundation to prevent battle sites and cemeteries like the one at Spotsylvania from being obliterated or stained by progress. "We've got about ten years left," he said. "If these places aren't saved now, they will be gone in a decade." Readers who want to help preserve our common past should write the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites, P.O. Box 23, Arlington, Va. 22210.

GRANT AND LEE, at the close of Spotsylvania, were about halfway through "the forty days"—the period when their armies were engaged some part of every day, Grant losing an average of 2,000 men a day and Lee, who could spare them less, losing fewer. Grant sidling to the left, Lee following, the armies next met at the North Anna River. The site of the standoff that resulted there is not on park property, and the surviving earthworks left by the armies are threatened, I was told, by a neighboring gravel pit whose owner wants to expand his business not only in space but in time as well.

The next full-scale battle came at Cold Harbor, a crossroads northeast of Richmond, which was named after a colonial inn that had provided its guests with a cold hospitality—room but no board. In front of Cold Harbor, on June 3, 1864, Grant attacked Lee's entrenchments straight on, across a seven-mile front. It was one of the greatest infantry charges of the war. It lasted less than a half hour and took more than 7,000 lives. The night before the attack an aide to Grant noticed Federal soldiers pinning notes on the backs of their coats—notes that said, "Here lies the body of . . ." They knew what to expect. Grant later repented of the attack. Still, in his *Memoirs* he obfuscated his decision to leave his wounded men unattended between the lines for four days after the battle rather than lose face by asking Lee for a proper truce. "While they lay there," William McFeeley writes, in his sympathetic biography of Grant, "Grant sat down and wrote the most affectionate of fatherly letters to [his daughter] Nellie. She would soon be nine, and he told her he would get her a buggy for the family pony. He simply shut out the horrors for which he was responsible and retreated into a fantasy of comfortable domesticity." Of the hundreds of wounded men left between

the lines for the four days, only two were found alive.

Cold Harbor is a National Historical Park today. It's not much to look at—just a row of old earthworks fronting on a clear field of fire. A beautiful wooded glade surrounds the battlefield, but my rambles in the woods were inhibited by the fine print in a park brochure disclaiming responsibility for any damage done to me by "poisonous snakes." Ca-veat tourist.

FACING ANOTHER stalemate, Grant shifted his troops out of the trenches at Cold Harbor and, for all that the baffled Confederates knew, into thin air. Lee was in the dark for several vital days as the Army of the Potomac moved not against Richmond but against Petersburg, below Richmond. If Petersburg fell, the supply line to Richmond would be cut. Starved of supplies, Lee would have no choice but to quit his entrenchments and fight it out with Grant in the open.

In the event, Grant managed to get his whole army across the James River (by a 2,100-foot pontoon bridge) and to the gates of Petersburg before Lee knew where he was. But dithering by the Union generals charged with making the initial assault on the lightly held Petersburg trenches cost irreplaceable time. Taking advantage of it, Lee was just able to get enough men into Petersburg to cheat Grant of his victory and prolong the war by ten months.

The siege of Petersburg and Richmond that now commenced was a vast undertaking, with the opposing trenches covering nearly thirty-five miles. Grant's strategy was to exploit his advantage in numbers by slowly extending his lines to the southwest of Petersburg. Lee would be forced to follow suit, and eventually his lines would thin out to the breaking point. To fill those stretched lines, Lee would in time contemplate the desperate step of drafting Negroes to fight in the cause of slavery.

No short article can convey the wealth of Civil War sites in and around Richmond—the visitor should pick up a map or history at the headquarters of the Richmond National Battlefield Park on Chimborazo Hill. The Petersburg National Battlefield takes two hours to tour by car. Its highlights include a remnant of the famous crater left when the Federals tried to blow up a section of the Confederate line ("The effort was a stupendous failure," Grant wrote in his

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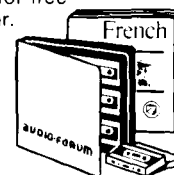
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Memoirs, using one of his rare adjectives) and the place where Lee mounted his last offensive of the war—a bloody, failed attempt to punch a hole in the Union line.

THE CITY OF Petersburg itself is worth at least a day's tour. It boasts a fascinating Siege Museum, where the visitor can gain a vivid idea of what life was like under Grant's guns. In addition, many houses that were damaged by those guns are still standing, among them the house where Grant and Lincoln met on April 3, 1865, just after Lee had pulled out of Petersburg. The owner invited the men into the parlor, but Grant said, "Thank you, sir, but I am smoking," and he and Lincoln stayed on the porch. While they were sitting there, a courier rode up and Grant was handed a telegram announcing that Richmond had fallen.

The house where this historic event took place is today deserted, run down; it borders a tobacco factory, also deserted. Yet it was here that Abraham Lincoln knew what might have been the greatest happiness of his life. Think of it; picture it. Grant opens the envelope and says, "Mr. President, Richmond is ours . . ." and Lincoln, delivered from his years-long nightmare—how would he react to such news? He had only days to live; this was his blessed moment. That the place where Lincoln's dream came true (Richmond captured, the end of the war at hand) should be a shabby wreck is appalling.

When Grant's sidling to the southwest of Petersburg finally menaced the railroad connecting the city to the remaining Rebel supply depots in western Virginia and North Carolina, Lee had no choice but to abandon Petersburg and Richmond. On forced night marches that left the roads littered with his exhausted men—scarecrows by now—he drove his dwindling army southwestward, hoping to link up with Joe Johnston in North Carolina, and then to turn on Sherman, coming up from the south, before dealing with Grant, coming down from the north. As everybody knows, he didn't make it. Surrounded at the village of Appomattox Court House, he surrendered the remnant of the Army of Northern Virginia to the Army of the Potomac on April 9, 1865.

Every American who has read anything about the Civil War has been to Appomattox in imagination. It is the village of our coming together, the hal-

lowed ground, where, all passion spent, we became the *United States*. The real Appomattox Court House matched my vision of it; rarely have federal dollars been spent more wisely than to keep it preserved as a nineteenth-century village. Properly, in my view, the Park Service nowhere mentions that the McLean House, where the surrender took place, was virtually looted by Grant's souvenir-crazed staff after he and Lee had finished with History.

Five days after the surrender, on Good Friday, several hundred miles to the south of Appomattox, a ceremony was held at Fort Sumter to mark the fourth anniversary of its surrender by Union forces under Major Robert Anderson. Lincoln was invited, but he chose to stay in Washington instead—he and Mrs. Lincoln planned to go to the theater. Several thousand people, including many notables, did come to Charleston Harbor for the ceremony, and at the strike of noon they gasped as a sergeant handed Anderson, looking much older than his sixty years, the shot-torn flag that had flown over Sumter throughout the bombardment that had set off the great war. A young woman from Philadelphia left this picture of the scene as Anderson prepared to run the old flag up over Sumter:

General Anderson stood up, bare-headed, took the halyards in his hands, and began to speak. At first I could not hear him, for his voice came thickly, but in a moment he said clearly, "I thank God I have lived to see this day," and after a few more words he began to hoist the flag. It went up slowly and hung limp against the staff, a weather-beaten, frayed, and shell-torn old flag, not fit for much more work, but when it had crept clear of the shelter of the walls a sudden breath of wind caught it, and it shook its folds and flew straight out above us, while every soldier and sailor instinctively saluted.

THE PRESENT DAY isn't just an encroachment on history; since the days of the inn whose limitations gave Cold Harbor its name, accommodations and eating places have no doubt greatly improved. In the Wilderness-Spotsylvania area a historically resonant place to stay is the **Richard Johnston Inn**, at 711 Caroline Street, Fredericksburg. Built in 1788, the inn offers period rooms at moderate prices (\$50 for a single to \$100 for a suite), which include a light but savory breakfast. Ask to stay in

the "summer kitchen," off the patio: it has a private entrance, a huge fireplace, and a private bath. Just up Caroline Street is **Chimney's Tavern**, which, like most of the buildings in Fredericksburg, was built in the Colonial era. It serves a mixture of hearty fare, like roast rack of lamb, and the usual contemporary excrescences (did George Washington eat quiche?). In warm weather, lunch is served on the patio, to the pleasing accompaniment of live guitar music.

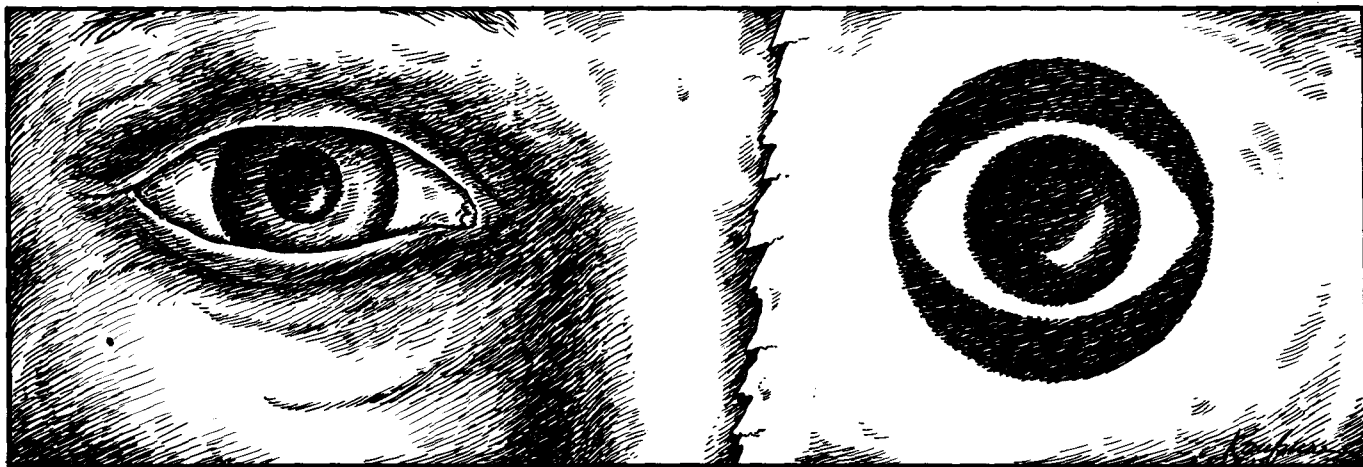
In Richmond the **Jefferson Sheraton Hotel**, at the corner of Franklin and Adams, is not another anonymous chain hostelry; though it is in a shabby district, it is a grand hotel, built in 1895 and run as The Jefferson until 1980, when it closed. The Sheraton Corporation took over the hotel, spent five years and \$46 million on its restoration, and re-opened it in 1986. Singles go for \$95–\$100, doubles \$109–\$114. A Sunday brunch is served in the Rotunda, a huge marble-columned room. For \$16.95 you can eat a whopping meal, drink enough champagne to make you rue that day, and listen to a swing band one-two its way through the great songs of yesteryear. Reservations are a good idea; so is proper dress.

The best meal I had in Richmond was at the **Jade Elephant**, an unpretentious eatery on Grace Street, near Virginia Commonwealth University. My lunch consisted of Cajun chicken, a fresh salad, good beer, and fine coffee. I spent three hours there, eating, drinking, reading General Grant's *Memoirs*, and listening to Cole Porter and Gershwin tunes on the sound system.

Any visitor to Petersburg should stay at **Mayfield**, an elegant eighteenth-century inn just south of the city, on Route 1. Rooms go for \$55–\$80; the rates include a memorably ample and delicious breakfast, served in a lovingly restored dining room with rich painted paneling and an ornate chandelier.

The **Radisson Hotel** in Lynchburg—which is just west of Appomattox and has more places to stay—is centrally located in Virginia's "Hill City," near historic walks and places (our room overlooked a plaque commemorating the birthplace of Douglas Southall Freeman the great Lee biographer). Coming back from dinner, my wife, son, and I met Jerry Falwell, whose ministry is located in Lynchburg, crossing the parking lot. He greeted us with a genuinely warm "Good evening!" which booming salutation helped to make it so. □

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by Ed Joyce.

Doubleday, \$19.95.

ED JOYCE WAS the president of CBS News for two years in the early eighties. He stands somewhere in the obscure second rank of players in the great drama that began when General William Westmoreland sued the network for libel and culminated when Laurence Tisch took control of CBS, in the fall of 1986. Joyce presided over the first wave of layoffs at CBS News, in 1985—the ones that seemed shocking at the time but don't anymore, because there have been so many subsequent layoffs at CBS.

With the publication of this book Joyce is not going to be a mostly forgotten figure anymore. Either he took copious notes on his day-to-day activities when he was running CBS News or he has an extraordinary memory, or both. Also, he feels ill enough used to have abandoned completely the corporate executive's usual code of silence about the statesmanlike aspects of his reign. He has produced a juicy and undiplomatic insider's account of what it's like to run a network news division, written with a real flair for dialogue and characterization. It is the kind of book from which any clever publicist should be able to dribble out several weeks' worth of tidbits to the New York gossip columnists.

For example, the Westmoreland case

revolved around CBS's contention that the general had, for bureaucratic reasons, ordered his subordinates to falsify estimates of enemy troop strength; while it was in court, the CBS Broadcast Group ordered Joyce, for bureaucratic reasons, to lower the budget estimates of CBS News, and the head of the television network to raise his estimates of advertising revenues.

There are many little image-deflating anecdotes about the on-air stars of CBS News. Dan Rather, Joyce's special target, once took an entourage in a chartered bus to East Hampton for the weekend to watch as a doctor taught him voice-relaxing exercises (CBS paid the bill, which was \$20,000). Another time, driven into a fugue state by insecurity over the prospect of being at a small party where the NBC anchor, Tom Brokaw, would also be a guest, Rather, who cultivates his image as an earthy Texan, walked in and gave Joyce a kiss. Phyllis George, when she was a co-anchor of the star-crossed *CBS Morning News*, once asked her producer to set up an interview for her with Indira Gandhi. Told that Gandhi had recently been assassinated, George said, "Oh . . . well, somebody like her." Mike Wallace wanted to cover up the CBS internal report on the Westmoreland documentary. Diane Sawyer hastened her departure from the *Morning News* by leaking to the press that she was going to move to *Sixty Minutes*, before CBS was ready.

JOYCE WAS brought in as executive vice-president of CBS News in 1981, as part of a package with the new president, Van Gordon Sauter. Both Sauter and Joyce had started their careers as

journalists but rose within CBS as general managers of local stations. Having demonstrated their ability to improve ratings locally, they were now supposed to rescue Dan Rather from a shaky start as anchorman.

The Sauter-Joyce team was on the whole a success. Rather's *Evening News*, with a snazzier look and a new executive producer, Howard Stringer, got a solid grip on first place in the ratings. The *Morning News* floundered, but it had always floundered. Sauter and Joyce became close friends and worked well together, in a Mr. Inside-Mr. Outside way. Sauter, who talked in the hip slang of an advertising executive and dressed like a professor (a professor who wears a billed cap advertising Red Man chewing tobacco, anyway), developed a high profile in the press, played nursemaid to Rather, and politicked at corporate headquarters, while Joyce did the administrative work. Then Sauter, hoping to rise to the presidency of the entire CBS Broadcast Group, left for an executive's job in the CBS corporate offices, and traded in his tweeds and pipe for pinstripe suits and cigars. Joyce succeeded him as president of CBS News.

Soon Joyce ran afoul of Dan Rather. By promoting Howard Stringer to executive vice-president of CBS News, he took Rather's executive producer away. He waged war, in person and in the pages of *Variety*, with Rather's agent, Richard Liebner. He renegotiated Rather's salary in a way that kept his compensation down (yes, down) to \$36 million over ten years, which was much less than CBS had been prepared to pay. Accused by Rather of shifting CBS News resources from the *Evening*

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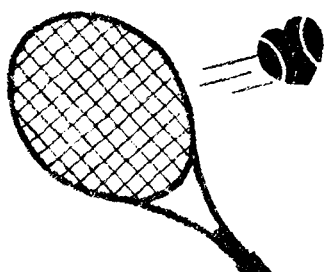
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to other broadcasts, Joyce wrote a memo convincingly rebutting the charge, which embarrassed Rather. When CBS was put "in play" on Wall Street through the efforts of Senator Jesse Helms, Ted Turner, and Ivan Boesky, Joyce was ordered to make layoffs. Rather, or maybe Liebner acting through Rather, shrewdly realized that the mood of crisis at CBS News had provided an opportunity to mount a power play against Joyce. Sauter, whose new job wasn't panning out, sided with Rather. Forced to choose between Rather and Joyce, the president of the Broadcast Group, Gene Janowski, concluded, as he told Joyce, "There are lots of presidents. There's only one Dan Rather." Joyce resigned, and Sauter returned to CBS News for a second term as its president (only to be fired himself less than a year later).

TV NEWS HAS NOW reached the point where TV entertainment programming was twenty years ago: the dominant sentiment about it is nostalgia for a past golden age. The golden age of news was sometime late in the Walter Cronkite era, when anchors were still former print reporters, when "entertainment values" didn't hold sway, when news divisions were completely independent of corporate headquarters. The blame for bringing the golden age to a close is usually placed on people like Sauter, Joyce, and Roone Arledge, of ABC—smoothies who care more about ratings and budgets than about the First Amendment. When Joyce was forced out, there was cheering inside CBS News, where his nickname was the Velvet Shiv.

Joyce never breaks from his story for long enough to lay out a real argument about the state of TV news; still, his book constitutes not just a self-defense but also an alternative theory of what's wrong. He presents the prevailing anti-executive view as the result of a successful disinformation campaign waged by the news stars and their agents, who are the real villains. Joyce is nostalgic too—nostalgic for the days before Rather's 1979 contract as anchor, which raised salaries by a quantum leap and made Liebner a major power within CBS News. Since then, as Joyce tells it, the stars have been pushing for goals that are essentially theatrical, not journalistic: more air time, better billing, constant adulation. They have used their supposed commitment to hard-news values as a smokescreen to cover a takeover of control of the news divisions from their

titular (and rightful) heads. Entertainment values, if they mean better presentation of the same news, are good, and if they mean using softer stories and misleading, worked-up presentation techniques, then the stars haven't really fought them. Layoffs are necessary simply because the payroll for talent has risen so rapidly over the past decade.

Because Joyce implies all this without arguing it, he can get away with inconsistencies. For example, while condemning Rather and Liebner at every turn, he sneaks in a presentation of Sauter that pretty much supports the standard criticisms. Sauter, not Joyce, insisted on hiring Phyllis George, and wanted to stop doing Edward R. Murrow-style issue-oriented documentaries, which always got low ratings. Sauter liked cutting budgets, whereas Joyce, contrary to his image inside and outside CBS News, cut them reluctantly and only to protect his people from even deeper cuts. Joyce, at least by his own account, functioned as Sauter's journalistic conscience: it was Joyce who was most horrified by CBS's excesses in the making of the Westmoreland documentary, Joyce who fought for more air time for class acts like Bill Moyers and Charles Kuralt, Joyce who was decent to the legendary CBS correspondent Charles Collingwood in his dotage.

Obviously, Joyce was not a disinterested witness to the changes at CBS News. He grinds his ax joyously—lucky him, that the institution where he was ill treated was CBS, one of very few companies for which there would be an audience eager to read the kind of score-settling anecdotes about divisional vice-presidents that most business executives can't even tell their own families, for fear of boring them. He almost never says that he made a mistake (I counted two such admissions in a long book), and he seems to have put in some scenes just to make someone squirm, such as the ones in which Stringer, who is now the president of CBS News, makes fun of Rather behind his back. Still, this is the only totally incautious look at CBS News from the inside that we're ever likely to get. It has a feeling of veracity. Joyce is smart, conscientious man—that he wrote a tell-all book doesn't mean that he is automatically in the literary league of Judith Exner. His work deserves to be taken seriously, which means that his not-quite-stated plaint about TV news ought to be judged according to whether his own evidence bears it out.

MOST OF WHAT Joyce has to tell us about running CBS News contains truth about corporate life in general, not television in particular; some large, submerged portion of CBS is just another big organization, whose folkways Joyce evokes well. There is a funny scene in which executives perform an intricate ballet on the CBS jet to maneuver into the seat next to Thomas Wyman, then the chairman, and another in which several underlings fool Wyman, who is devoted to eliminating perquisites, into believing that a fancy hotel suite where he is staying is actually a single room. Joyce and Sauter practice such timeless bureaucratic arts as jockeying over office space, making sure everyone knows that important mistakes were made on someone else's watch, speaking only in bland generalities at staff meetings, and reacting to the threat of budget cuts by claiming they'll simply have to stop covering the news. The Joyce-Sauter relationship is itself a great example of the American male business friendship. Its high point is a scene in which Sauter awkwardly stammers out his feelings of affection for Joyce, after which both men fall into a deeply mortified silence. A few months later Sauter is stabbing Joyce in the back.

Even CBS's founder, William Paley, who inspires in CBS executives a total, abject awe and fear (one especially tough vice-president confides to Joyce that he doesn't "have the guts" to ask for an autograph on his copy of Paley's memoirs), is a fairly typical tycoon figure. Much of Joyce's own life at CBS was generically that of a big-time managing editor: the constant shuffling of people from job to job, the state visits to foreign bureaus, the high-level hooky-playing at London clothiers and choice fly-fishing streams. As the president of CBS News, Joyce was an important personage—he had his own car and driver, he had thousands of people under his command, he testified regularly in Washington—but he had surprisingly little power, if you define power as the ability to act autonomously and influence events, rather than temporarily fulfilling the duties that go along with a job title. He was relentlessly forced into balancing the demands of his staff, his superiors, and his customers.

THERE ARE, THOUGH, two ways in which CBS News is atypical of organizations in general and news organizations in particular. Neither peculiarity

has much effect on CBS News's role as a purveyor of journalism. The first is that it is the object of intense, constant interest from the press. Dealing with reporters successfully—not reporters working for CBS News but reporters writing about it—is a crucial part of the repertoire of skills needed to thrive in the upper echelons of the news division. The best press-handlers, like Sauter, Stringer, Rather, and Sawyer, spend a significant portion of their working lives talking to reporters. (Stringer, according to Joyce, even went so far as to give a job in the CBS News Washington bureau to a man with no television experience, because he was a friend of *The Washington Post's* TV critic, Tom Shales.)

The real players at CBS News tell the press more about what's going on at CBS



than they tell their own colleagues, and they use the press to communicate with corporate headquarters (which has no idea what's really going on) and to wage internal warfare. At the same time, the attitude of people at CBS News toward the press, as Joyce tells it, is generally one of contempt. The reason is that the reporters who cover CBS are, with few exceptions, pawns of their sources. They'll believe anything they're told, and they yearn for the approval of the big names in broadcasting. Rather, who often saunters in to work in mid-afternoon (according to Joyce) and whose real job is simply to read the copy he is given, is especially successful at making the press believe that he spends his days as a newspaper-style managing editor of the broadcast and as a watchdog of press freedom. Joyce says that Rather makes command decisions about story assignment and composition only when there's

a newspaper reporter watching, and that he is, along with Sauter, a master of the art of leaking energetically to further his interests and then proclaiming himself to be shocked and mystified by the nonsense the press is publishing about CBS News.

The other difference between CBS and most news organizations—the difference that Joyce finds especially alarming—is that the reporters in the top echelon (along with one producer, Don Hewitt, of *Sixty Minutes*), are vastly better paid, and also more powerful, than the people running the organization. During the time that Joyce was the president of CBS News, Rather seems to have been making something like ten times as much money as Joyce was, and of course Rather was able to force Joyce out as well. Obviously, this situation is a headache for whoever is the president of CBS News, a headache that no editor of a newspaper or magazine will ever have to endure. The question is whether Joyce is just grouching or is sounding an important warning.

THERE IS SOME temptation to dismiss Joyce's case even while thoroughly enjoying his book. His outlook stems from professional dissatisfaction, not dispassionate observation. In fact, the opinions—even the character flaws—of each person in the book seem to grow out of his professional position: Rather is vain, Jankowski, the Broadcast Group president, is cautious, Sauter lusts after ratings. All managers in talent-based businesses, from book publishing to movies to professional sports, dislike aggressive agents. One wonders whether Joyce, if he had been given different responsibilities, would have developed different beliefs to go along with them.

Also, Joyce's sense of outrage about the excesses of the star system runs counter to the cynicism we've taught ourselves to feel about TV news. After *Network* and *Broadcast News*, after Rather's six-minute walkout and his spat with George Bush, after three rounds of major layoffs at CBS, we know that television journalism is a shark-infested world; knowing it is part of the fun of watching the news. Instead of being menacing, Dan Rather as Joyce portrays him is funny, a very big version of Ted Baxter, of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. His "personal vice president" at CBS News, his bodyguards, his habit of referring to himself in the third person—

these are the marks of a pompous man but not a corrupt or dangerous one. It's as difficult to hate a person who can, after worrying day and night about his ratings, say with a straight face, "Ratings are not something Dan Rather knows a lot about," or who can, after plotting Joyce's downfall, sorrowfully say, "Ed, I just hope that someday, someone will explain to me how this all happened," as it is to hate the Duke and the Dauphin in *Huckleberry Finn*.

The proper course is probably to go about halfway with Joyce—to accept that he has a legitimate beef about the anchors without sharing his feeling that this problem is either new or the only thing wrong with TV news. The stars at CBS News have always made more money than the executives: if Edward R. Murrow was a saint, he was the first one to live on Park Avenue. Also, the executives, as well as the stars, have changed CBS News tremendously in the eighties. The demise of the Murrow-style prime-time documentary in favor of *57th Street* and *48 Hours* represents not just a response to ratings pressure from outside the news division but also the invention of a new, visually more dramatic style of TV journalism which is the product of the tastes of executives like Sauter, Stringer, and Andrew Lack, not of any of the on-air stars.

That Dan Rather could effect the sacking of Joyce is probably indicative of a new level of monarchic behavior by an anchor. Even if Rather has no journalistic agenda whatsoever, his behavior as Joyce describes it implicitly pushes news closer to entertainment. It encourages the network's inertial tendency in programming, which is to treat (and pay) the stars like stars but be ruthless the minute their popularity begins to flag, and not to get locked into a large permanent payroll for any show.

Inside the news divisions the mismatch between how much the anchors make and what they do creates a dissonant feeling—it makes the correspondents and producers wonder whether their real job is to create an elaborate illusion of journalistic activity that will enable the anchors to maximize their wealth and power. The anchors' defense is that they are the guardians of TV's journalistic integrity: the more clout they have, the safer the crown jewels will be. If Joyce is right that this notion is nothing but a big lie, then it's hard to imagine how the anchors' stardom helps anyone but them. □

THE FRIGHTFUL AND THE SUBLIME

BY BENJAMIN DEMOTT

MASTER OF THE RETURN

by Tova Reich.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$21.95.

TOVA REICH'S *Master of the Return* is a novel in the form of an ambush—a wildly funny story that becomes mysteriously touching and ponderable before the end. The focus is a far-out Israeli religious feud involving a sect of penitents—"extreme converts to the Hassidism of Rabbi [Rav] Nahman of Bratslav." The sect is based at Uman House, in Jerusalem's Moslem Quarter, financed by an angel known as "old man Katz in [Brooklyn's] Boro Park," and includes potheads, math students, rock musicians, a former Southern Baptist, and an "innocent artist" from Morocco who "closes his eyes and praises God with each brushstroke."

The issue dividing the community concerns pilgrimages. One Umanite faction believes that visiting Rabbi Rav Nahman's birthplace, near Kiev, is indispensable to spiritual health; the opposition says no. (The two sides agree that the place "cures" nocturnal emissions.) The narrative centers on moments rever-

berantly symbolic for the faithful—a wedding, a birth, a death and burial, a community-building ascent of Mount Sinai—and the event that brings the dispute to a head is a kidnapping. At the novel's climax a prodigal returns after narrowly avoiding slaughter in a ritual sacrifice, and his rescue (by Israeli soldiers) opens a path toward factional détente.

Comic characterization abounds in *Master of the Return*. The pro-pilgrimage faction is inspired by one Shmuel (né Samuel) Himmelhoch, a former rock-band lighting specialist—a man with a gold ring in his nostril, gold chains around his neck, henna-colored chest hair (Shmuel dyes it), and a "solid-gold mantra," purchased from a guru for \$10,000 during an Indian gig. ("The mantra was 'feh.'") The anti-pilgrimage chief is Rabbi Reb Lev Lurie, a math demon preoccupied with "referencing and cross-referencing the numerical values of the letters and words in the Torah," and bent on smuggling an IBM computer through Israeli customs (in pieces in a case of Pampers) to speed his work.

The situations involving these and other major characters move frequently toward farce. An overnight funeral march featuring a platoon of woman-baiting yeshiva boys resembles a Broadway update of Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, choreography by Brooks and Reiner. At a noisy wedding party hash pipes are passed while angry Moslems upstairs rain garbage on the celebrants. In the Jerusalem airport three Umanite pilgrims, in broad hats, sidelocks, and beards, traveling to Kiev on stolen Mexican passports (Shmuel Himmelhoch is Manuel Domingo), battle a fourth who's infuriated because he's excluded from the trip. "Here comes Pancho Villa!" shouts a checkpoint security officer as the excluded pilgrim bears down on the group.

But, as I said, farcical tones don't finally dominate this book. Partly this is because the author has a lively imagination of states of possession and perfervid faith; the vividness with which she dramatizes these phenomena burns off, for long stretches, awareness of the zealots' absurdities. The steadying presence of history in the story also counts for something. (It induces memories of previous, pertinent, dignifying lives and ancient dreams of transcendence that breathe in Jerusalem's streets and temples.) And so, too, does the recurrence of feelings that, although extreme in their expression, are normative at their core—a mother's grief for her stoler



child, a grandmother's articulated outrage at the madness she sees as the thief.

More important than any of this, though, is Tova Reich's fine refusal to simplify the central experiences of the book—experiences that reason and “taste” tend to dismiss as preposterous but that intelligence, aware that religion and decorum are not one, is slower to scorn. In a chapter called “The Dead Will Rise,” the Uman House faithful “[mix] two different types of rejoicings”—the festival of Purim and a wedding—and the tides of grotesquerie seem at moments engulfing. The marriage celebrated is polygamous, arranged by a rabbi's wife who is pursuing war against the Arabs by other means. (“Imagine how many more Jews we could produce if every Jewish man married two, or three, or however many wives he could handle.”) The bride is from Macon, Georgia, a Baptist devoted to hashish and foot massage who, when she soars, waxes beamish about her conversion. Song, dance, jokes, pranks, mad visions, and credulousness are everywhere, and at a crisis point the mob is persuaded that one of its leaders—Abba Nissim—has levitated.

Reich fully evokes the saturnalian aspects—the mental and moral chaos of Uman House. About the levitation she remarks drily that although “it is impossible to confirm or deny these reports,” it's undeniable that “at that moment Nissim rose in the estimation of many. . . .” But her manner is astringent, not contemptuous; her cool, unillusioned eye seems incapable of indifference to the intensities of desire—the desperate hunger for some means of escape from habit, prudence, identity, politics, class; some higher, better way. The levitator calls out to his flock, “Let us elevate ourselves. Let us cast off our old shells and expose our inner core of purity. Let us grow and expand in spirit. Let us rise to the pinnacle of Mount Sinai and await the answer!” Voices cry out in answer: “I shall rise! Let us climb . . . ! Let us rise! I shall rise! We shall rise!”

And as eyes close in passionate supplication, in fierce loony longing for ecstasy, old questions and sayings come to mind. (“The frightful is the gate to the sublime”—Saul Bellow, paraphrasing Heidegger.) Is the collective delicacy that assures us the Umanites are gripped by false faith capable of recognizing truth? The tiny, powerless band of disciples lost in its vision two thousand years

Answers to the April Puzzles

“MAGIC”

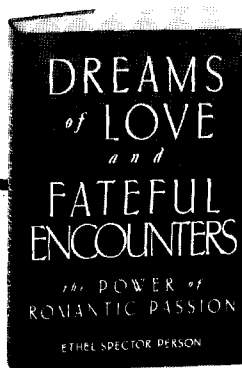
Across. 1. RETRAC-TOR (rev.) 5. ED(WAR)D(y) 10. A-R-RIVAL 11. (h)OBOE(s) 12. DIA-DEM (rev.) 13. F(R)ACTION 14. ARTIFACTS (anag.) 16. (ho)OSIERS 18. PRIERS (homoph.) 21. NEAP (hidden) 24. ERGO(t) 27. S-TONES 29. PAST-O-R 31. S-A-TURN 32. BACTRIAN (anag.) 33. T(AX)IED 34. TRA-CTOR (rev.) 35. RE(FRA)CTORY 36. AC(TRESS)ES 37. REGNA-L (rev.) Down. 1. RADIOACTIVE (anag.) 2. (v)ERIES(t) 3. TRACTARIAN (anag. with r for c) 4. O(VE)RREACT (creator anag.) 5. E(LLIP)TIC (rev.) 6. D(IFFRACT)S (traffic anag.) 7. A-BID-E 8. ROOF RACK (anag.) 9. DEN-TS 15. SING(E)S 17. EXACTIONS (anag. minus me) 19. PART(ERR)-E 20. SHYSTERS (pun) 22. PTERODACTYL (anag.) 23. A(T-T)RACTION (raincoat anag.) 25. SEANCE (hidden) 26. C(A-R)AFE 27. SUB-TRA(C)T (tart rev.) 28. OL(D)OS (solo rev.) 30. O-PER-A

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ago: was it so utterly different from the Uman House faithful?

These are my questions, not the author's. But her feeling for the complex, perhaps inexpressible relationships between true vision and the kingdom of grotesque comedy freshens them in the reader's mind. Tova Reich is a marvelously enigmatic original, and there are effects in her book that are beyond casual summoning, secrets reason can't reach. I urge you not to miss *Master of the Return*. □

BRIEF REVIEWS



LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA by Gabriel García Márquez. Knopf, \$18.95. Mr. Márquez's new work is indeed about love, several types of love developing over a half century in a Caribbean coastal country where cholera is endemic and becomes a metaphor for all the other plagues that bedevil the place. Despite garbage in the harbor, corpses in the streets, and civil war in the outback, the testy heroine, her almost too virtuous husband, and the jilted fiancé of her girlhood manage to get on with life and ultimately, in a wryly surprising way, with each other. They are interesting characters whose sometimes bizarre proceedings interact with the peculiarities of the society they inhabit to create a wonderfully vivid and convincing world.

BLACK BOX by Amos Oz. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$19.95. With a bit of ingenuity Mr. Oz's intricate and brilliantly written novel can be taken as an allegory of the various kinds of fanaticism—military, religious, pacifistic, financial—influencing Israeli society. The tale can also be read more simply, and perhaps more pleasurably, as a domestic tragicomedy in which an overemotional woman, her devoutly Orthodox husband, her resentful former spouse, and his perpetually exasperated lawyer battle one another for control of young Boaz, whose principal ambition—other than engaging in adolescent deviltry—is to escape from all of them. Boaz is the woman's son by her first husband, who is a renowned scholar in Chicago. This ar-

rangement enables the author to tell the story through letters and telegrams with an artfully individual style for each character. The mail between America and Israel crackles with complaints and reproaches and devious arguments, as Mr. Oz's people squabble their way to something resembling reconciliation.

THE GREENLANDERS by Jane Smiley. Knopf, \$19.95. Like a proper saga writer, Ms. Smiley begins with observable fact—"Asgeir Gunnarsson farmed at Gunnars Stead near Undir Hofdi church in Austfjord"—and only later discreetly introduces such anachronistic matters as her characters' thoughts and emotions. The effect of an antique simplicity of style carries throughout the novel, which is a chronicle of three generations of Gunnars Stead folk, their kin, neighbors, and enemies, with what seems like the entire population of Greenland on the sidelines. In fact, it is most of the population of Greenland, because the time is the late fourteenth century, when falling temperatures and encroaching skraelings were wearing the Greenland colony out of existence. Ms. Smiley's *Greenlanders*, of course, are unaware of exactly what is happening to them. They lament the days of large cattle herds, plentiful food supplies, valuable trade goods, and frequent ships, but keep hoping for the return of these benefits. They regret the decline of skills and learning, but make do with an untrained law speaker and a couple of half-frocked priests. They sometimes act badly and sometimes act well and, like real people, they change their opinions and modify their conduct. One comes to believe that if Gunnar Asgeirsson's slowly compiled manuscript had survived, it would tell something very like this absorbing tale of survival at the forgotten edge of the world.

USTINOV IN RUSSIA by Peter Ustinov. Summit, \$22.95. As a famous actor and admired playwright of Russian descent, Mr. Ustinov was welcomed in the Soviet Union rather like a wandering relative back for a visit and, like such a relative, wishes to report only good of the old homestead. He is frank, "by way of no apology," about his conviction that much of Russian life is ignored or misrepresented in the West and about his desire to make a modest correction of that imbalance. His book avoids political argument, concentrating instead on events and conversations, some surprising and

some very funny, designed to show Russian citizens as people little different from and no more sinister than the rest of us. The text is ornamented with the author's amusing sketches and his fine photographs, many of which show a fairyland of clean snow and frost-feathered trees against which the colorful buildings glow like jewels. There are no photographs of domestic interiors, which Mr. Ustinov found to be usually overcrowded or jerry-built or both.

KATHERINE MANSFIELD: A Secret Life by Claire Tomalin. Knopf, \$22.95. After Mansfield's death, her husband, John Middleton Murry, tried to represent her as an ethereal and almost saintly creature. In reaction to this sentimental implausibility Ms. Tomalin, with access to material ignored or suppressed by Murry, has written one of those odd biographies in which the author displays a mixture of respect and distaste for the subject. Katherine Mansfield, a fine and original writer, undoubtedly was mercurial, difficult, and a liar whenever whimsy or circumstances indicated that invention was preferable to fact. Her secret life, however, is no great revelation. In her time (1888–1923) even a determined "new woman" was not likely to advertise an illegitimate child, a blackmailing ex-lover, and venereal disease. The child was still-born, the lover was paid off, and the venereal infection was incompetently treated. Mansfield kept quiet about all of them and can reasonably be considered more sensible than secretive.

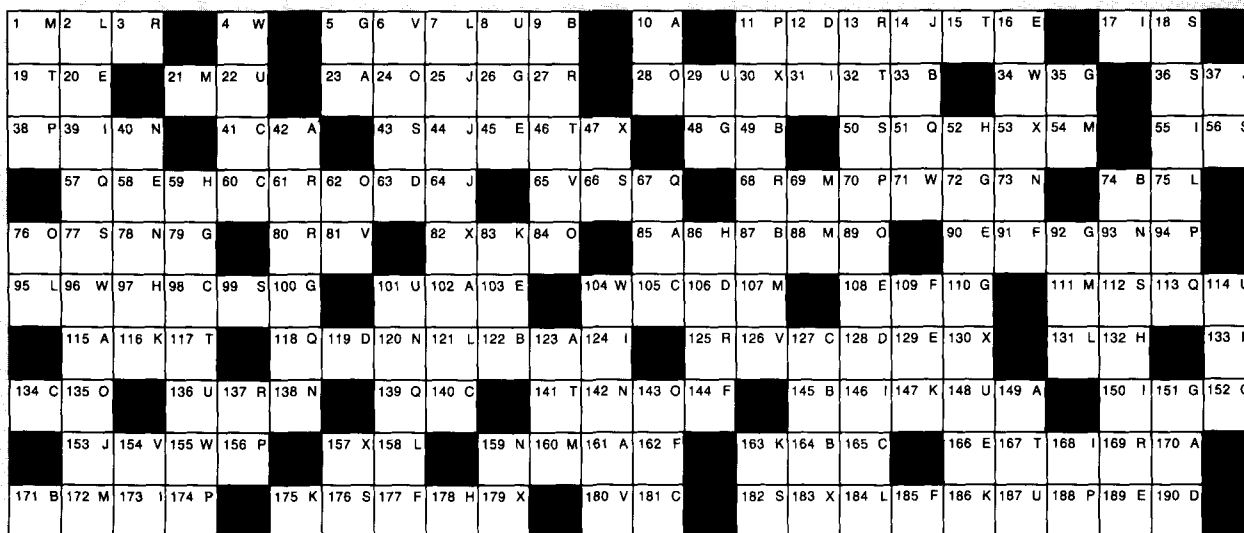
HOT MONEY by Dick Francis. Putnam, \$17.95. Mr. Francis has invented a splendid variety of criminal schemes for his suspense novels, but has admitted only two motives for his villains—greed and insanity. The motive in his latest thriller is blatantly greed. With the help of five wives, three of whom are still snarling on his frontiers, the scandalously rich Malcolm Pembroke has acquired a gaggle of objectionable offspring plus certain unlovely in-laws, and one of this gang is evidently overeager to inherit the old boy's pelf. His one reasonable son, Ian, is called in as bodyguard. Ian is an amateur jockey, his good sense probably due to associating more with horse than with Pembrokes, and he tells the story. It is a good one, full of races, champagne, family brawls, and surprises.

—Phoebe-Lou Adam

ACROSTIC No. 34

BY DOROTHY OSBORNE

The letters of clue answers, when put in the appropriately numbered squares, will spell out a quotation. The first letters of clue answers spell the author and source of the quotation.



The solution to Acrostic No. 33 appears on page 93.

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| A. Hating tobacco smoke | 161 10 149 23 85 115 42 102 123 170 | M. Proletariat (2 wds.) | 160 54 69 107 111 172 21 88 1 |
| B. In the buff (2 wds.) | 122 87 49 74 171 164 33 9 145 | N. Child's play; piece of cake (2 wds.) | 40 93 159 73 120 142 78 138 |
| C. Discoverer of alpha and beta radiation | 98 41 165 134 181 60 140 105 127 152 | O. Mismanaged; done badly (2 wds.) | 76 62 143 28 135 89 84 24 |
| D. Hotbed of Reformation activity | 190 119 63 128 106 12 | P. Buzzing with excitement | 38 94 11 188 174 133 156 70 |
| E. Two fried eggs, to a hash-slinger (3 wds.) | 90 16 129 166 108 189 103 45 58 20 | Q. Duke Snider or Sandy Koufax | 118 139 67 113 57 51 |
| F. Annual award of the National Cartoonists' Society | 144 185 177 91 162 109 | R. <i>Catch-22</i> protagonist | 61 137 68 125 27 3 169 80 13 |
| G. Character in a Dickens mystery (2 wds.) | 72 79 5 48 151 110 26 92 35 100 | S. Feeling punk (3 wds.) | 176 56 50 77 66 99 182 18 112
43 36 |
| H. Drive in a leisurely way | 97 86 52 132 178 59 | T. Actress in <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> (2 wds.) | 46 167 19 141 117 32 15 |
| I. South American tree with a bitter bark | 150 39 31 55 168 17 146 124 173 | U. Anglo-Saxon heir apparent | 101 136 187 114 8 29 22 148 |
| J. Rock band with a tautological name (2 wds.) | 37 153 25 14 44 64 | V. North African fortress | 126 65 81 180 154 6 |
| K. Dim sum choice | 175 163 147 186 83 116 | W. Baltic republic of the Soviet Union | 104 4 34 155 71 96 |
| L. Late-in-life learner | 2 121 75 7 184 131 158 95 | X. Keats's "brain-sick shepherd-prince" | 47 53 179 82 130 157 183 30 |

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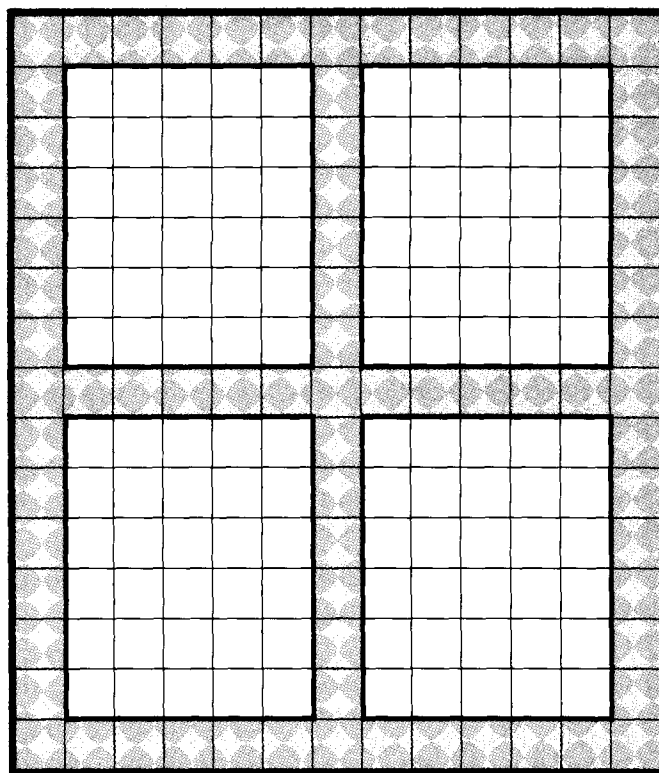
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THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

WINDOW BOXES

There are nine words belonging in each of the four window panes (NW, NE, SW, and SE); two rows or columns in each pane do not form words and are not clued. Though their exact locations are not given, the words in each pane are clued in order, acrosses and then downs. Every clue's answer extends at least the full width or height of the pane; some begin and/or end in the shaded frame. In the finished diagram the letters in the frame will identify the contents of some window boxes. Answers include four proper nouns and an alternate spelling at SE 1.



The answers to last month's Puzzler appear on page 93.

NW

1. Cedar window boxes distinguished scientist
2. Help 99 out of 100 with cutting
3. One making reparation for a skin treatment
4. Woman's "yes" changed to dissent
5. Some breakfast—about a thousand pecan rolls
6. Vehicle going around Oregon chased by vicious dog
7. Impressed about card left behind
8. Glutton's eating end of meal in heaps
9. Detail of chill: temperature in New York

NE

1. Start off making an itinerary for excursion
2. Parson reorganized circle

3. Mountain pass planned for two points
4. Modish, like "Love Is Blue"
5. Scene I: "Foreign Relations"
6. Fruit drink containing can's last residue
7. Composer in picnic tossed horseshoe
8. Bore's eyelid-fluttering failed, ultimately
9. Trap grey bats with some punch

SW

1. Soap ingredient is base, as to pH
2. Strike left a train line in the air
3. Supposing that South American Indians should acquire English (*two words*)
4. Just passing through British port
5. Be obliged to suitors upon hearing instruments
6. Come alive in Japan?

7. Bear-like beast guarding gold for mythical woman
8. Indian vehicle's wheel taken by Alamo hero
9. Malign a chief of staff by definition

SE

1. Small amount of chard cooked on Monday
2. Rejected children's author *Self* publishes
3. Container at front of oven for vegetable
4. Prepares drive with curves
5. Caesar backed wine caper
6. Run into Eskimo behaving strangely vexatious
7. Cooks receiving Latin honors
8. \$100 rent includes middle-of-month wash
9. Finish off ruthless, crazed shark

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

WORD WATCH

BY ANNE H. SOUKHANOV

bomb blanket *noun*, a relatively lightweight covering, made of ballistic nylon or a combination of nylon and Kevlar, with a fire-resistant coating, used by bomb-disposal squads to contain an explosion. In the event of an explosion of great magnitude, the blanket will rise to a parachute configuration, with drooping sides, thereby containing the blast. Also called *bomb suppression blanket*: "The Burlington Industrial Fabrics Co. has developed a *bomb blanket*. . . that . . . has effectively suppressed the explosive force of a pipe bomb" (Michael Dewar, *Weapons & Equipment of Counter-Terrorism*).

BACKGROUND: The deadly subculture of terrorism and counterterrorism has spawned an extensive lexicon rich in euphemism and connotations of domesticity. Some other terms are *appliqué armor*, *bomb curtain*, and *security research broom*. (*Appliqué armor* protects vehicles; *bomb curtains* catch flying glass; *security research brooms* locate surveillance and explosive devices.)

chopsocky *noun*, a low-budget martial-arts film characterized by violent fights involving kung fu: "The *chopsockies* present a poor image of martial arts, with the lead actor provoking violence. The character I play always acts in self-defense" (Chuck Norris, quoted by the Associated Press).

BACKGROUND: *Chopsocky*, like *kidvid* and *kideo* (television programming and home video for children), *oater* (a western mov-

Here are a few of the words being tracked by the editors of The American Heritage Dictionary, published by Houghton Mifflin. A new word that exhibits sustained use may eventually make its way into the dictionary. The information below represents the first stage of research, not the final product.

ie), *celeb bio tuner* (a film about a show-business personality), and, years ago, *baloney*, *payola*, and *sitcom*, was either coined or popularized by *Variety*. *Chopsocky* appears to be a blend—a mix of *chop* (the martial-arts striking move), *sock* (a punch), and the noun suffix *-y* (meaning "activity or an instance of it"). The influence of the term *chop suey* cannot be discounted.

crash and burn *idiom*, to fail utterly, usually in a publicized manner: "When Hart crashed and burned, most of his people caught on somewhere else" (*Washington Post*). "O'Grady . . . crashed and burned 17 times before finally qualifying for the [golf] Tour four years ago" (*Sports Illustrated*).

BACKGROUND: A study of news stories in major papers going back ten years reveals numerous occurrences of the phrase *crash and burn* referring specifically to air and auto accidents. Our first citation for a figurative use of the term appears in a 1978 issue of *The Washington Post*: "The Sonics were on a tear, the arena exploding with noise, and the Bullets were no longer speeding. They were *crashing and burning*." Other evidence suggests early use of the phrase by skateboarders, referring to wipeouts, and by college students, with reference to academic failure.

duh *interjection*, used to express great hesitation, uncertainty, displeasure, or contempt: "There they find—*duh*—a pudgy redneck sheriff, ornery cowboys just itching for a fight" (*Washington Post*).

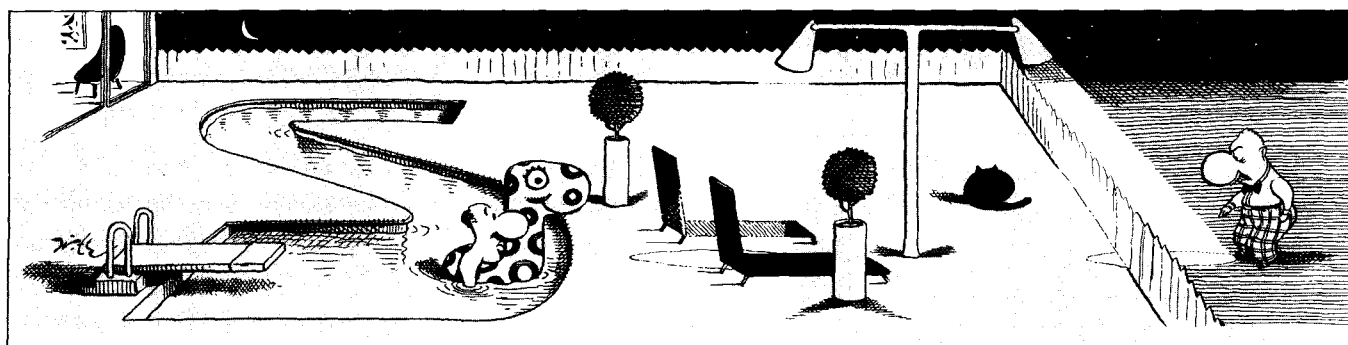
BACKGROUND: *Duh* is an interjection often heard (pronounced in a loud, guttural tone) but rarely seen in print; however, it may soon join its cousins *uh*, *ah*, *ow*, *hum*, *humph*, *hmm*, *mm*, and *eh* in English dictionaries. What interests lexicographers is the emergence of an adjectival form of the word: "That's so *duh* that you've got to smile. But it takes enormous theatrical skill to sustain two hours of drift on the stage, and the skill rate here isn't that high" (*Los Angeles Times*). In this instance *duh* has taken on the meaning "stupidly deficient to the point of eliciting boredom." A noun use has also evolved, meaning "one whose intellectual powers are decidedly below par," as in "He's a real *duh*."

eyealyzer *noun*, a test for drunkenness that estimates the subject's blood alcohol content by calculating the amount of alcohol in the vapor above the eye's lachrymal fluid: "Researchers in Ontario, Canada, have come up with a new test. . . They have dubbed their method the '*eyealyzer*'" (Hatfield, Mass., *Valley Advocate*).

BACKGROUND: According to the one citation we have collected for this word thus far, the *eyealyzer* test is noninvasive and can be performed on unconscious subjects. The *eyealyzer* apparatus, developed by researchers at the Toronto Addiction Research Foundation and the University of Toronto's Department of Pharmacology, consists of a small clear plastic cone, the base of which has been cut to fit snugly over the subject's eyebrow, nose, and cheek, with a gas sensor fitted to the apex of the cone.

spillite *noun*, extraneous light that spills over from a brightly illuminated area, such as a swimming pool or tennis court, into places where the illumination is unwanted: "He [the owner of a tennis court] hired . . . experts [during a neighborhood controversy] who testified . . . that they had reduced the lighting '5 foot-candles lower' than most courts. The experts swore neighbors would experience 'no *spillite*'" (*The New York Times*).

BACKGROUND: Advocates of simplified, or phonetic, spellings, such as *lite*, *brite*, and *nite* will no doubt rejoice at the sight of *spillite*. The fact that *spillite* is being used in a context involving a legal process may result in its being entered in law data bases and dictionaries giving it an imprimatur normally denied to words with such nontraditional spellings (whose use is generally restricted to product development, advertising, and intentionally slang contexts).



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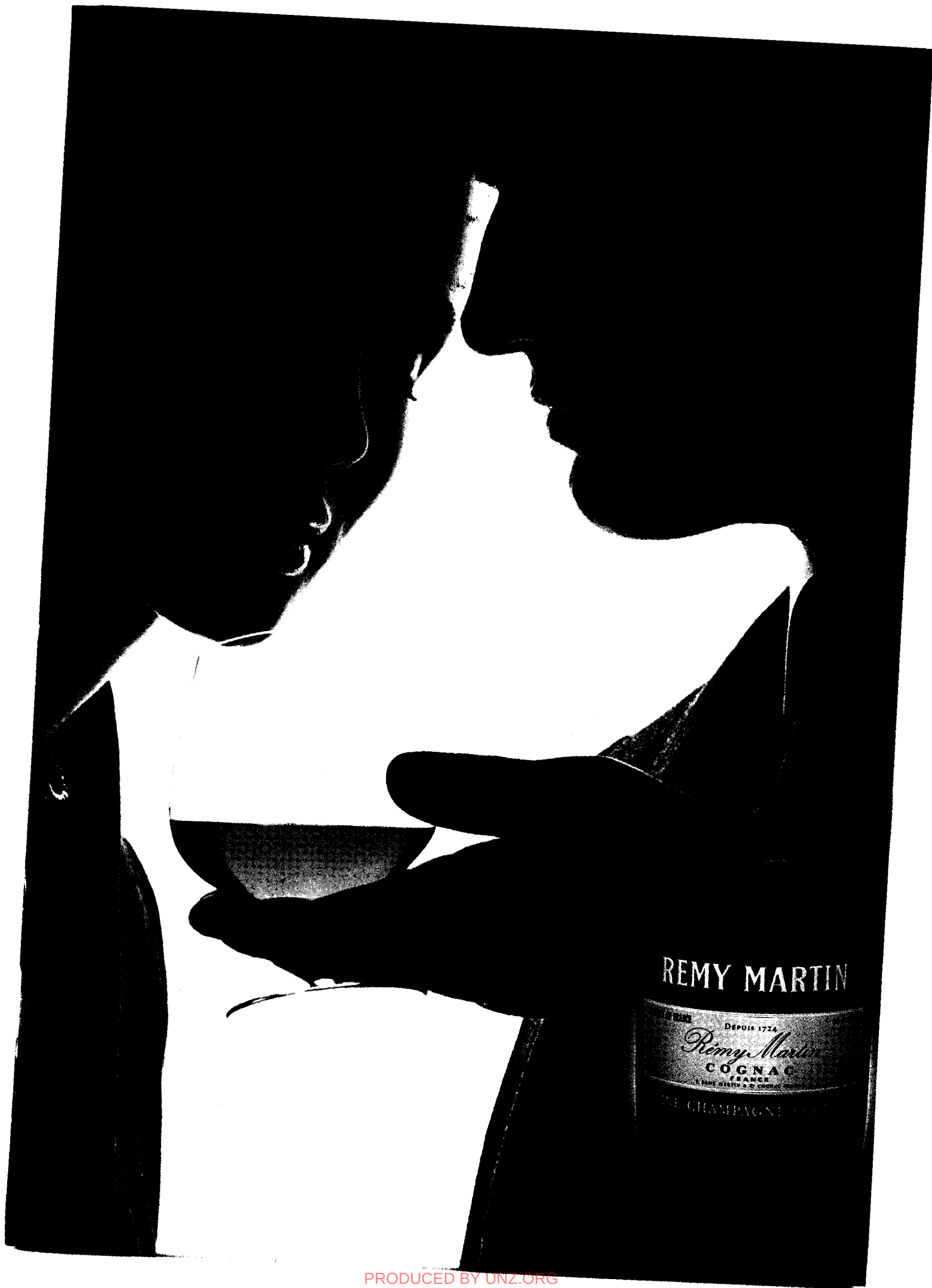
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